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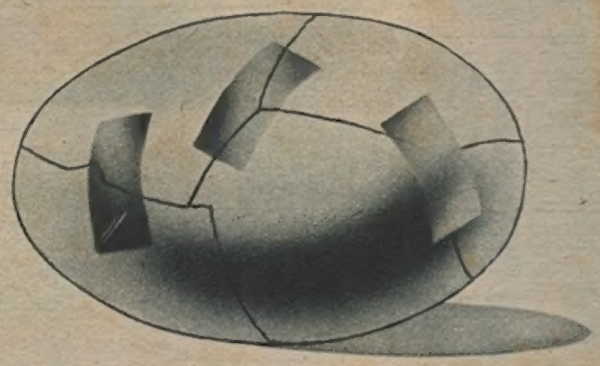

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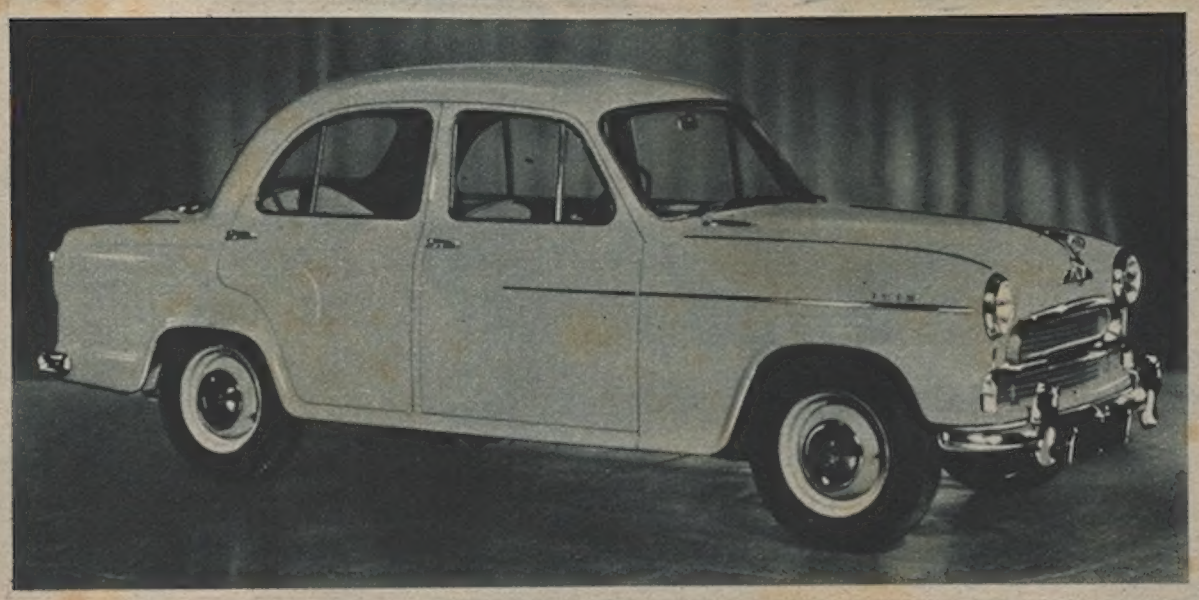

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Jack Finney puts drama into small-town life

THE odd thing about Jack Finney, whose latest story, *Contents Of The Dead Man's Pockets*, begins on page 10, is that he leads quite a normal and uneventful life. The tense, razor-edge situations in his stories never seem to take place in the quiet township of Mill Valley, near San Francisco, where he lives with his wife and two children.

Finney appreciates, however, the dramatic effect of terrifying events when they make their impact on ordinary people. "It could happen here, to you or me," was the general reaction when his thriller *The Body Snatchers* was published two years ago. This story, later made into a film, described how creatures from another world literally "took over" the bodies of people in a small community, so that nobody was certain whether their next-door neighbours were human—or not. The setting for the story was a quiet township near San Francisco, like the one in which Finney lives.

California has proved to be a happy hunting ground for Finney since he settled there to devote himself to writing. His first novel, *Five Against The House*, has also been filmed, and neighbouring Hollywood has bought the film rights of his forthcoming novel, before its publication.

Since he first left his native Illinois, Finney has travelled widely throughout the United States. In New York he became an advertising executive, and his coast-to-coast wanderings in search of a writer's paradise have taken him to the unlikeliest places. For a time he was even a citizen of that fabulous gambling and divorce centre in the Nevada desert—Reno.

BEFORE painting this week's cover, Michael Critchlow looked for an authentic classroom background to sketch. He found it in one of Surrey's new secondary schools, a few miles from his Chelsea home. As an artist, he was delighted by the school's bright and airy architecture. "So different from the dingy schools of my day."

Critchlow, who is fifty and wears a goatee beard, was born in Wolverhampton. He studied at Wolverhampton School of Art—starting there just after Charles Wheeler, now President of the Royal Academy, had left. He does a great deal of "gallery" painting besides his commercial work, and many of his pictures have been exhibited at the Royal Academy. These include three of his early JOHN BULL cover paintings, in oils.

Critchlow's wife, Rosalind, is a journalist and the beauty expert on the ITV programme *Monday Club*. They have two sons—Keith, aged twenty-three, who is a student at the Royal College of Art, and David, twenty-five, who qualified as an architect last year.

When he is not painting, Critchlow likes to listen to classical music, or play snooker or golf; last year he won the scratch gold medal at Richmond Golf Club. And he sees one soccer match a season—when Chelsea entertain his home town team, Wolverhampton Wanderers, at Stamford Bridge.

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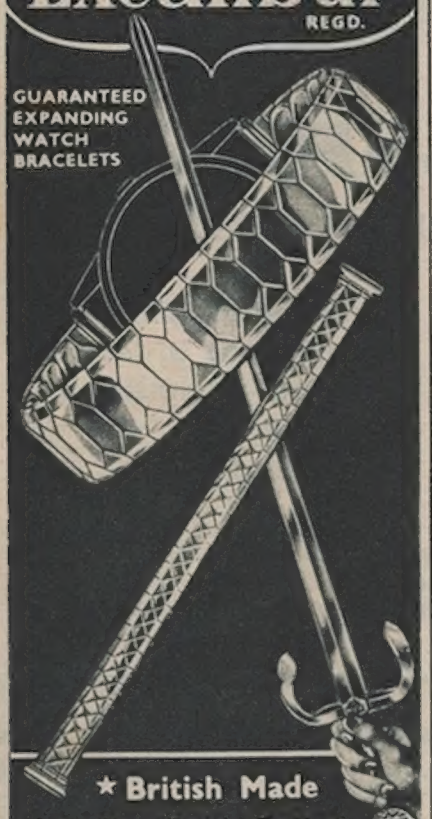

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Free Speech

● Should rush-hour cars be banned? ● Doctors have a word for it

● It pays to be independent

MOST of us motorists who formerly travelled daily to the office by car have found no great inconvenience in going by train or bus during petrol rationing.

The roads have been clearer and faster for essential traffic, and probably safer for both vehicles and pedestrians. Do we have to go back to the bad old days of traffic delays and dangers when rationing ceases? Probably very few of us want that, yet for lack of any regulation we shall certainly return to it.

Why not ban all private cars in the large towns during rush hours—say 8 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., and 5 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.—W. T. F., London.

A London bus with a full load of sixty-one passengers occupies about one-twentieth of the length of the road needed by the forty cars which normally carry this number of people into London in the rush-hour. Sixty-one people could be accommodated in one steam train coach with many seats to spare.

Important Points

In my experience as an electrical engineer, it is people with insufficient power points who complain about short flexes on appliances ("Free Speech," January 19).

I advise three or more power points in living-rooms in new houses, and with 13-amp. points this is certainly more economical. — J. T. ROBERTS, Dundee.

Unmistakable

In certain parts of the United States, any leakage of gas ("Free Speech," December 29) would soon be noticed. Hydrogen sulphide, a gas producing

a smell like bad eggs, is often introduced into the domestic gas supply there.—A. BILLSON, Nottingham.

Special Appointment

One day, while being interviewed in a London hospital, a nurse came in and said, "Doctor Dorothy Lee is here to see you." My doctor apologized, and disappeared. I learned later that all the doctors in the corridors went off to see Dr. Lee.

But Dr. Lee was really a cup of tea—a corruption of the Cockney rhyming slang phrase, "Rosie Lee." —S. W. P., South Norwood.

"There are code words in Latin and Greek, too," says a doctor. "A difficult patient might have 'haematomentia' written in the letter for a specialist — meaning bloodyminded. And a patient who likes to have something important wrong with him might contract 'coryza'—a cold."

Personal Contact

A friend just back from the United States cites this example of American efficiency.

He put through a personal ("person to person") call from New York to a business man in Winnipeg, Canada. He didn't get through for an hour, and was just about to complain when the operator explained that the man was not in his office at Winnipeg. She had tried Calgary (seven hundred miles from Winnipeg) and a client's home in Montreal before finally reaching him in a Montreal restaurant.

For this amazing service he was charged no more than for a single personal call.—R. W. S., Mottram, Manchester.

"Our personal call system provides a similar service," says the G.P.O. "It is also possible to make a personal call to somebody not on the telephone—if a neighbour's number is given."

Not Appreciated

I have noticed that a boy of fourteen or fifteen usually has a very small opinion of his father's knowledge and

experience — probably because the father underrates the son.

There are big differences in their points of view, of course, and probably few of us fully appreciate our fathers until we are forty.

The great American humorist, Mark Twain, once said: "When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand having the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years."—T. E., Yorkshire.

One At A Time

My local public library allows me two tickets which I can use to borrow any kind of book, and a supplementary one for non-fiction books only. I can obtain extra tickets for non-fiction, but not for fiction. Is there a national ruling, and if so, what is its purpose?—R. G. H. ANDREWS, Highams Park, London, E.4.

"Libraries have a quick turnover of fiction books," says the Library Association, "and many of them limit fiction tickets because some people hold up books by taking out more than they can read in the lending period. But local authorities make their own rules about it, and the practice varies."

Free Gift

I was interested to read about spiders in the bath ("Free Speech," December 29), because recently we found a five-inch tarantula in a fruit dish, sitting in a bunch of bananas. My young daughter found it, and I killed it.—CLARICE MAIZEL, Worksop, Notts.

"Bananas are washed when they reach Britain, but some creatures, such as large spiders, lizards and snakes, sometimes get trapped in the bunches and are overlooked," says a fruit importer. "Once we found a tree snake, five feet long, in a consignment from Brazil."

A London Zoo official adds: "Creatures which arrive among bananas are often sent in to us. We are glad to have them."

Lessons Of Life

Last year I left home and took a flat in the city, looking forward to a better job and gay evenings.

Although I have these, I also have a lot of household tasks and careful budgeting to do.

Though I am only eighteen, I have learned the value of money and realized the satisfaction there is in standing on my own two feet. And now I really appreciate the companionship of my family at weekends.

I think every girl should leave home, if only for a year or two, to learn to appreciate the real values of life.—VALERIE DEAGUE, Leeds, 2.

Marked Seats

The theatre official who says that it is difficult to reserve seats in galleries ("Free Speech," January 12) should visit Wembley Stadium. Here there are rows and rows of bench-type seats, with each row lettered and each seat numbered.—W. H. YOUNG, Grays, Essex.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

THOSE whispers and giggles during the lesson seemed rather funny at the time. And even when teacher told him to stay in after school and do a hundred lines he was enjoying the secret respect of those around him. But now . . . now he's hardly begun, and they've already forgotten him. Mouldy lot! And old teacher doesn't care either. . . . But Critchlow's cover teacher cares a great deal. It's one thing to be strict in school, and quite another to keep a boy friend waiting at a street corner. Ah well—perhaps a hundred lines *were* rather a lot. . . .

We beat 'em, Mum-we beat 'em by 3 goals !

JIMMY CAME bursting into the room. "We beat them 3 nil," he cried. "I never thought we would. Gosh, it was terrific! Gosh, I'm hungry!" Mum and Dad beamed. Sally gave him a smiling wink. *She* knew there was bigger news to come: Jimmy would get his colours now.

"I'm just going to make a fresh pot of tea. I won't be a minute," said Mum. "And mind — don't tell them a thing while I'm out of the room." She hurried out to the kitchen. What a blessing she'd made an extra lot of Jimmy's favourite tomato sandwiches. What a blessing she'd bought plenty of good, fresh bread.

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Vera Dean was helpless from birth. This is her own story of her triumph

Three steps forward

ON January 26, 1928, in a two-roomed basement flat in a little back street in Kennington, London, suddenly, I was born. My entrance was quite unceremonious. Father dashed out to get the midwife, who was unfortunately out on an emergency call, and, panic-stricken, he combed the neighbourhood for a substitute. After a short while, which to Mother seemed like eternity, Father and a nurse arrived.

The nurse announced, "She is asphyxiated," and commenced to revive me by touching my lips with brandy and plunging my body into alternate bowls of hot and cold water.

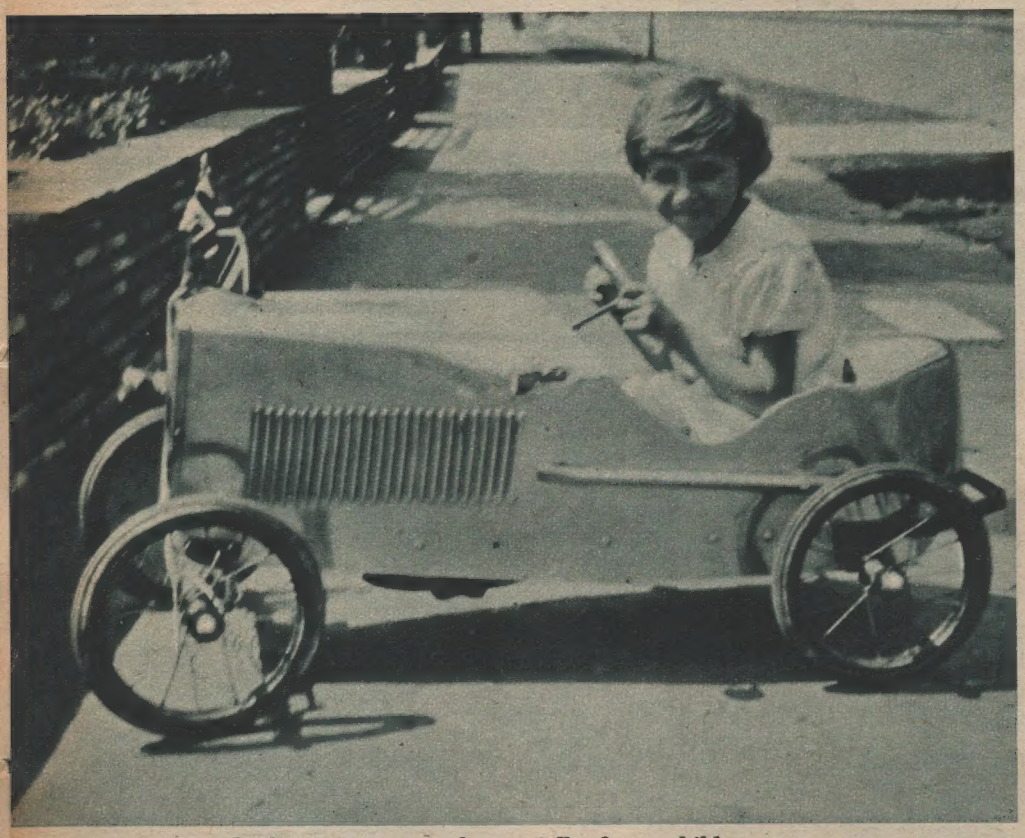
After several hours her perseverance was rewarded and I began to show signs of life, but the nurse obligingly told Mother: "This child will never be any use—she'll never be like a normal child." Mother, grief-stricken, despairingly asked whether in that case it would not be better to let that small spark of life flicker out, but the horrified nurse replied that it was her duty to keep the child alive.

I was transferred to hospital where I stayed for a fortnight and was then discharged as a normal baby. I gained weight but made very little other progress, and the only sound that

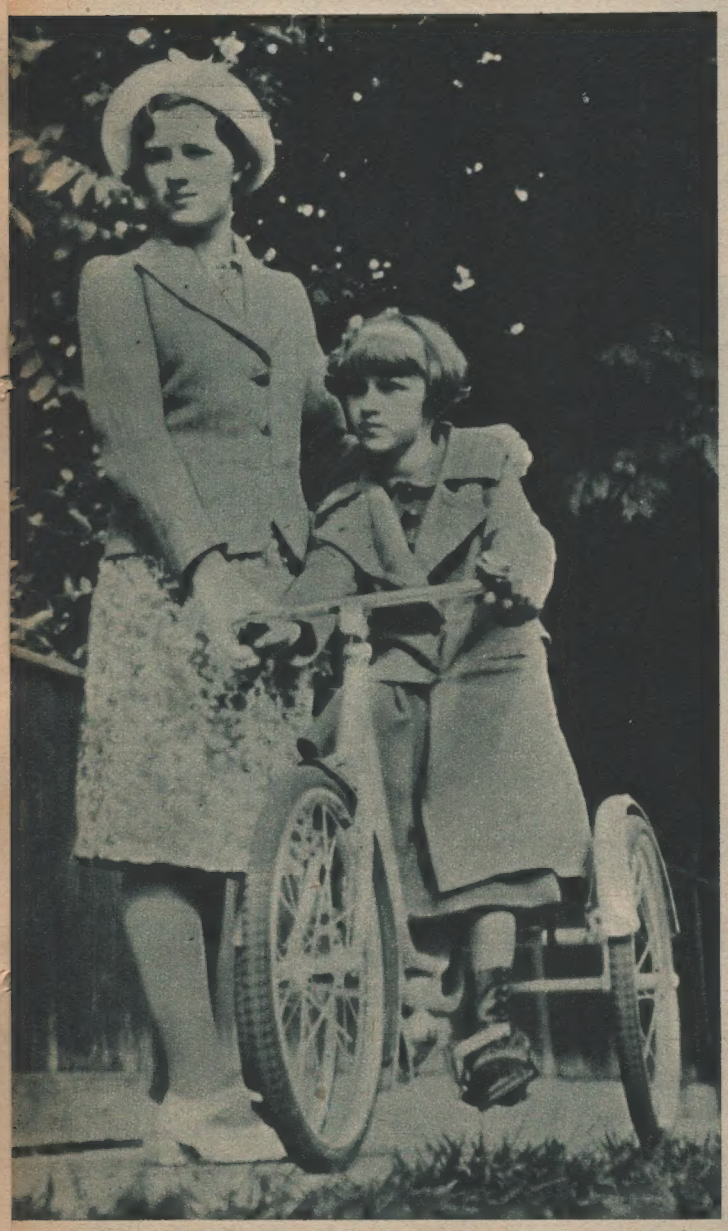
With an indomitable will to succeed, Vera Dean has overcome many of the handicaps of cerebral palsy. She will never forget the day when, secretly, she first walked unaided—she took three steps forward. Now she can do delicate needlework and help to teach handicapped children

JOHN BULL COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Vera, aged eleven, with her parents. When Vera was a child, doctors told her mother: "We're sorry, but we can't do any more for your child"



In her toy car, made specially for a child with cerebral palsy, Vera played for hours. But she found pedalling intolerably slow



Gladys, Vera's sister, took her out often. Vera's delight was to visit a nearby common and ride on her tricycle among the trees

passed my lips was a continuous moan, rather like the squealing of a young pig. It was impossible to keep food down as I vomited continually; my small body was alternately stiff and limp, but by some miracle I survived and grew.

Soon it became apparent that the midwife's dreadful prophecy was coming true. Though nobody knew it at the time, my brain had been injured when I was born. At the age of two I did not sit up and made no attempt to cry or feed myself.

Doctors said there was nothing wrong, I was merely backward. Eventually, when I was two and a half it was diagnosed that I had cerebral palsy—or spastic paralysis, as it was then called—and I was admitted to a children's hospital, where I stayed for three years.

I spent most of the time in bed. It was still impossible to sit up without help, owing to my great unsteadiness in all movement. The nurses would prop me up with pillows and I would tighten every muscle in an effort to stay rigidly in that position. My body would become very tense and my neck seemed to disappear as my head became hunched between my shoulders. My arms curled right up and my toes and legs turned inwards. I was at that time, and remained for many years, like a little wriggling ball.

When I was four the doctors decided that there was nothing further they could do for me and I was discharged.

At that time we were living in a second-floor flat at Streatham, London. We lived there until I was seven years old and weighed about four stone, and Mother realized that soon it would be impossible for her to carry me and my wheel chair up and down the stairs. My only means of getting about indoors was by a peculiar kind of jumping forward on my knees—rather like the hopping of a frog—and, as I wore boots all the time, the continual *thud, thud* on the ceiling of the flat below caused considerable annoyance to our neighbours. Directly I started crawling about, the woman downstairs retaliated by knocking on her ceiling with a broomstick. Luckily, it wasn't long before we found a house at Brixton, where we spent seven happy years.

The house was rather small but it had a fairly long back garden and here I would sit in the toy car that Mother had bought from a woman whose cerebral palsied son had outgrown it. I used to go up and down the path, not using the pedals—that was far too slow—but by pushing on the ground with my feet in a sort of walking movement. I played for hours in that car and the steering wheel would get hot where I grabbed it so tightly.

It was still impossible for me to sit upright on a chair or on the floor without support, but my parents were determined that I should walk, so they bought me a baby's pram for a toy. Every Sunday morning, after church, my sister Gladys would put her big doll in one end of it, sit me in the other, and take me out. When we came to a quiet street, Gladys would take me out of the pram and make me push it. I was so proud of that pram and it was a thrill to push it.

ANOTHER toy I had was a second-hand tricycle that had been specially built for a cerebral palsied boy. It was larger than a normal child's tricycle, and Father made a wooden box seat with a strap to go round my waist, so that I could not fall off. To keep my feet from flying off the pedals, leather straps were put over my toes.

I loved going to the common on that tricycle. I could go across the grass, and in and out of the big trees. To go where I liked was heaven. I felt like a bird let out of a cage and was always sorry when it was time to go home.

But most of my time was spent either on the floor in the living-room or on a mat in the garden. Father, who worked on London's Underground railway, made a swing for Gladys and my brother Stanley, and a special swing for me, one that I could not fall out of. The hours I spent on that swing! I could push on the ground with my feet, and when I got high I could see into the next garden where children were running and playing. When they saw me they would stop and stare, and, frightened, I would call for Mother to take me indoors.

Stanley left school at fifteen and went to work for the B.B.C. He was very keen to make progress and would pull old radio sets apart to see how they worked. One day he put one of these sets in the cupboard under the stairs and took a wire from it into the sitting-room, where

Judy the dog with Vera and her brother Stanley. The snapshot of Stanley in uniform was the first one that Vera took. He set the camera for her, and then she gripped it with her hands and knees

he attached it to a microphone. Then he told me to wait until Father came in and just talk.

As soon as Father came into the house, I said: "Daddy, do you know where I am? I do love you, Daddy."

Poor man, he looked everywhere round the stairs for me. When he gave up, Stanley told him what he had done. Father came in and picked me up from the floor, and amid our laughter he said how glad he was that nothing had happened to me.

I have always loved drawing and painting, and I spent many happy hours kneeling on the floor, holding a pencil with one hand on top of the other, and dribbling profusely while trying to produce something which looked like a picture. My favourite subject was Father. He was a handsome man. To other people it didn't matter very much what I drew as all my pictures looked like scribble.

Another favourite pastime was playing with my dolls. There were about twenty of them; big ones, small ones, china and celluloid ones, Teddy bears and dogs; each one was known by name. The game I always played was "hospitals." I did not know much about schools, but I did know all about hospitals. My dream was to be a doctor and help other people handicapped like myself.

Every week Mother and I were taken by ambulance to hospital, where I was given massage and remedial exercises. This pattern was followed for several years, going from one hospital to another, but sooner or later each doctor gave the same verdict: "We're sorry, Mother, but we can't do any more for your child."

Although I was now eight years old I could make no more than a few noises with my throat. Somehow the family usually knew what I was trying to say, but to outsiders I was dumb.

About this time Father heard of a place at Clapham Junction where two women were doing very good work by giving sunray and electrical treatment to sick and crippled people. So once a week, winter and summer, Mother put me in my wheel chair and pushed me the four or five miles each way. At the centre I was stripped and put on a bed under a big sunray lamp. It was lovely and warm and soothing, but the only effect it seemed to have was to turn my skin brown and since then I have always looked rather sunburned.

In July, 1939, Father kept getting a pain in his chest and the doctors diagnosed indigestion. But he got no better, and we decided to spend a fortnight's holiday at the sea in the hope that the fresh air would do him some good.

A week before we were due to go away Father's leave was suddenly cancelled, and on September 3, instead of being on a train to happiness, I was sitting on his lap listening to the awful announcement on the radio that war had been declared.

By Christmas of that year Father was very ill, and on Boxing Day, Mother insisted that he should go to hospital. On January 20, 1940, he died of a tumour on the lung. . . .

It was a lovely summer day in June, 1940, when I was taken to Queen Mary's Hospital for Children, at Carshalton, Surrey. I was examined and then bathed and shampooed by two nurses. I tried to tell them that Mother had given me a bath that morning and washed my hair the night before, but they could not understand what I said.

I was confined to bed, and I began to think about myself. Why was I in bed? Why was I in hospital? Why had I been born at all? Sitting on my feet, to keep them still, I looked at my shaking arms and thought about my shaking head and my incessant dribbling. I was the perfect picture of a village fool, without being silly. I still could not walk, nor could I sit on my bottom but only insecurely on the end of my spine. I knew that I was a "spastic" but to myself I was normal.

After about five weeks a new routine started for me. I would be dressed after breakfast and allowed to stay up until tea-time. A masseuse gave me daily treatment which I liked very much. During the day I sat by the bed of another girl, with my legs underneath it (this

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What was Vera Dean's handicap?

CEREBRAL palsy is caused by an injury to the brain—usually at birth. The parts of the brain which control movements of the body are damaged so that the child cannot perform with normal ease the actions which he desires. The ordinary but all-important achievements of childhood, such as learning to walk and talk, to read and write, may be monstrously difficult for him and he may even be absolutely helpless.

Vera Dean's ability to move naturally was disordered in this way by an accidental injury. So, when she began to learn, her movements were grossly unsteady. Eating and drinking, sitting up, standing, dressing—to do all these simple acts of everyday life she needed to be helped. And in the more complex tasks of reading and writing and speaking intelligibly she made almost no progress at all.

When Vera was a child, cerebral palsy was regarded as a disability that could best be treated by mechanical aids, exercises, and surgery.

But in the mid-nineteenth century, a London doctor, William Little, had advocated trying to treat the disordered brain function itself. And nearly a hundred years later, this approach was brought to Vera, then aged fifteen.

Instead of attempts to eliminate her erratic movements or to teach her to form a letter or hold a spoon at a time when these acts were impossible for her, this approach used her learning powers for acquiring such steadiness of movement that these things became possible for her.

Through this approach she learned a mental discipline which enabled her to build up, under guidance, a competence in moving which she uses for everything she does.

It was necessary for Vera to have the ability to learn, the will to get better, the courage to go on and on.

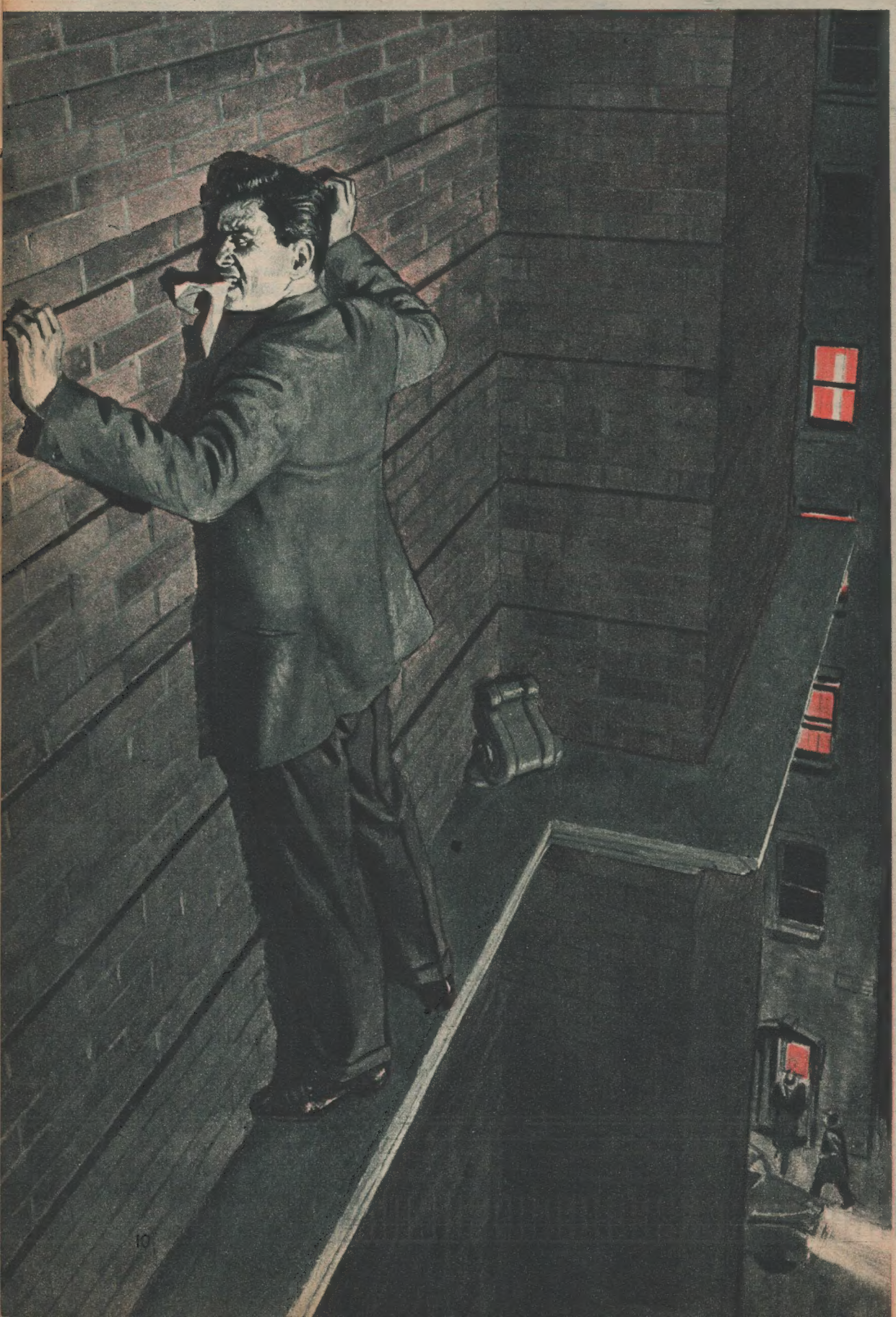
How well she benefited from this approach is shown in this story—written by herself, partly by hand, partly on a typewriter—of her triumph over an appalling disability.

A scrap of paper that nobody would understand. . . . And he might not live to know what it was worth

CONTENTS OF THE DEAD MAN'S POCKETS

by JACK FINNEY

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR



TOM LOWNDES rolled a sheet of heavy paper into the portable typewriter standing on the little desk in the living-room. *Inter-office memo,* it was headed, and he typed tomorrow's date just below this; then he glanced at a creased yellow sheet, covered with his own handwriting, beside the typewriter.

"Hot in here," he muttered to himself. Then, across the tiny hall at his back, he heard the muffled clang of wire coat-hangers in the wardrobe and, at this reminder of what his wife was doing, felt oddly guilty.

He got up, moved to the living-room window beside the desk and stood staring down through the autumn night at the High Street six storeys below. He was a tall, lean, dark-haired young man in slacks and a pullover.

He placed the palms of his hands against the top edge of the lower window frame and shoved upwards. But, as usual, the window didn't budge, and he had to lower his hands and then shoot them up hard to jolt the window open a few inches. He dusted his hands, muttering.

But still he didn't begin his work. He crossed the room to the hall doorway and, leaning against the jamb, called: "Clare?" When his wife answered he said: "You're quite sure you don't mind going alone?"

"No." Her voice was muffled, and he knew her head and shoulders were in the wardrobe. Then the tap of her high heels sounded and she appeared at the end of the little hall, wearing a slip, both hands raised to one ear, clipping on an ear-ring. She smiled at him—a slender, very pretty girl with light-brown hair. "It's just that I don't like to think of you missing the picture you were so keen to see."

"Yes, I know." He ran his fingers through her hair. "I've got to get this done, though."

She nodded, accepting this. Then, glancing at the desk across the living-room, she said: "You work too much, Tom, and too hard."

He smiled. "You won't mind, though, will you, when the money comes rolling in and I'm known as the Genius of the Grocery Trade?"

"I suppose not." She smiled and turned back towards the bedroom.

At his desk again, Tom lighted a cigarette; then, a few moments later, as Clare appeared, dressed and ready to leave, he set it on the rim of the ash-tray.

"Just after seven," she said, glancing at her watch. "I'll just be in time for the last programme."

He walked to the hall cupboard to help her

Tom felt a sudden rush of giddiness sweep over him. He opened his eyes wide, keeping his cheek pressed tight against the bricks

He kissed Clare goodbye . . . and suddenly he felt that he ought to go with her

on with her coat. He kissed her then and, for an instant, holding her close, he was tempted to go with her; it was not actually true that he had to work tonight, though he very much wanted to. This was his own scheme, unannounced as yet in his office, and it could be postponed. *But then they wouldn't see it till Monday,* he thought once again, *and if I give it to the boss tomorrow, he might read it over the weekend. . . .*

"Have a good time," he said aloud, and opened the door, feeling the air from the corridor, smelling faintly of floor polish, stream gently past his face.

He watched her walk to the lift, and then closed the door. As the door opening narrowed, the current of warm air from the hall rushed past him with accelerated force. Then he heard the sound of paper fluttering from his desk.

Turning, he saw a sheet of white paper drifting to the floor in a series of arcs, and another sheet, yellow, moving towards the window, caught in the dying current. As he watched, the paper struck the bottom edge of the window and hung there for an instant. Then, as the moving air stilled completely, he saw the yellow sheet drop to the window ledge and slide over out of sight.

He ran across the room, grasped the bottom edge of the window and tugged, staring through the glass. He saw the yellow sheet, dimly now, in the darkness outside, lying on the ornamental ledge a yard below the window. Even as he watched it was moving, scraping slowly along the ledge, pushed by the breeze.

He heaved on the window with all his strength, and it shot open with a bang. But the paper was past his reach and, leaning out into the night, he watched it scud steadily along the ledge to the south, half plastered against the building's wall.

The living-room of the next flat to the south projected a yard or more farther out towards the street than this one. And now the yellow sheet, sliding along the stone ledge, nearly invisible in the night, was stopped by the projection. It lay motionless then, in the corner formed by the two walls—a good five yards away, pressed firmly against the ornate corner ornament of the ledge.

He knelt at the window and stared at the yellow paper for a full minute or more, waiting for it to slide off the ledge and fall, hoping he could follow its course to the street, and then hurry down in the lift and retrieve it. But it didn't move. And then he saw that the paper was caught firmly between a projection of the convoluted corner ornament and the ledge. He thought about the poker from the fireplace, then the broom, then the mop—discarding each thought as it occurred to him. There was nothing in the flat long enough to reach the paper.

It was hard for him to understand that he actually had to abandon it—it was ridiculous—and he began to curse. On four long Saturday afternoons he had stood in self-service shops, counting the people who passed certain displays, and the results were scribbled on that yellow sheet. From stacks of trade publications, gone over page by page in snatched half-hours at work and during evenings at home, he had copied facts and figures on to that sheet.

All were needed to support and lend authority to his idea for a new display method for grocers' shops; without them his idea was a mere opinion. And there they all lay, in his own improvised shorthand—countless hours of work—out there on the ledge.

FOR many seconds he believed he was going to abandon the yellow sheet, that there was nothing else to do. The work could be duplicated. But it would take two months, and the time to present this idea, damn it, was *now,* for use in the spring displays. He struck his fist on the window ledge.

This project, and others like it, would gradually mark him out from the score of other young men in his company. They were the beginning of the long, long climb to where he was determined to be, at the very top. . . .

He thought about climbing out and fetching the paper. It shouldn't be difficult. The ledge, he saw, measuring it with his eye, was about as wide as the length of his shoe, and perfectly flat. And every fifth row of brick in the face of the building was indented about half an inch, enough to maintain balance easily.

On a sudden impulse he got to his feet, walked to the hall wardrobe and took out an old sports jacket. He put it on and crossed the room rapidly towards the open window. In the back of his mind he knew that he had better hurry and get this over with before he thought too much, and at the window he didn't allow himself to hesitate.

He swung a leg over the sill, then felt for and found the ledge a yard below the window with his foot. Gripping the bottom of the window frame very tightly and carefully, he slowly ducked his head under it, feeling on his face the sudden change from the warm air of the room to the chill outside.

With infinite care he brought out his other leg, his mind concentrating on what he was doing. Then he slowly stood erect. Now, balanced easily and firmly, he stood on the ledge outside in the darkness and in the slight, chill breeze, six storeys above the street, staring into his own lighted flat, odd and different-seeming now.

Carefully, he shifted his finger-tip grip to the indented row of bricks directly to his right. It was hard to take the first shuffling sideways step—to make himself move—and fear stirred in his stomach; but he did it, again by not allowing himself time to think.

Without pause he continued—right foot, left foot, right foot, left—shoe soles scraping along the rough stone, fingers sliding along the exposed edging of brick. He could feel his balance firm and secure, and moving along the ledge was quite as easy as he had thought it would be.

The buttons of his jacket scraped steadily along the rough bricks and he could feel them

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Miklos with his secretary. He engages assistants only if they are keen on sport

Magic carpet for Europe's soccer

From Blackburn to Budapest, Bela Miklos guides teams on tour. He does everything but play

by DON EVERITT

After the Hungarian revolt, Red Banner footballers were stranded in Vienna. They cabled Miklos, who flew out to help them

TWENTY-THREE Hungarians fleeing from Budapest last November sent a cryptic cable to a tiny office near the Haymarket in London. It read: PLEASE COME AT ONCE TO HELP US.

In a lull in the rebellion, Imre Nagy, then the Hungarian Prime Minister, had sent the players and officials of the country's two leading soccer teams across the border to Vienna in a convoy of ministerial limousines. He told them: "It's better that you should show the world the flag of free Hungary rather than become corpses in the gutter."

The twenty-three members of the Hungarian Gymnastic Club team, M.T.K., known under the Communist régime as Red Banner, arrived in Austria without money, without equipment, and with only the clothes they wore. To get them out of their predicament and help them to plan their immediate future, they borrowed the price of a cable which they sent to a London travel agent named Bela Miklos.

Miklos, a diffident, ingenuous Hungarian who became a British subject, flew to Vienna the next day. He conferred with the team, helped them out of their financial embarrassment, and returned to London. A few days later, he welcomed the team to Britain and took them on a three-week soccer tour which he had arranged with Football League clubs.

Miklos had made plans for M.T.K. to continue playing football indefinitely on this side of the Iron Curtain, but a stern order from the Hungarian Football Association forced the majority of the team to consider the safety of their families and to leave for home.

It was significant that M.T.K. turned to Bela Miklos for assistance. Any leading European football team in similar circumstances might well have done the same. All over the Continent, Miklos has a reputation as an organizer dedicated to the cause of international soccer.

For twenty years he has acted as a matchmaker between British and Continental soccer clubs. With league teams he tours Europe as courier and interpreter. As the Football Association's official liaison officer he has accompanied representative sides on visits to the Balkan states.

In these capacities fifty-six year old Miklos receives no payment. When, as in most cases, he books a team's travelling and hotel accommodation, he takes the normal travel agency percentage, but his expenses in arranging the matches and travelling with the teams comes from his own pocket.

Frequently during British soccer's close season Miklos has four or five teams touring the Continent simultaneously, and he tries to watch over them all. In three days he escorted Sheffield Wednesday to Switzerland, left the team in his wife's care while he called on Arsenal in Zurich, then flew to Paris to meet Tottenham Hotspur. Finally, he caught a sleeper to join Preston North End in Lugano.

Today, Miklos reckons that more than half the teams in the Football League come to him to arrange their Continental matches: "In fact, I get almost more than I can swallow."

Some explanation of Miklos's status comes from Eric Taylor, manager of Sheffield Wednesday. "Bela takes everything out of the club manager's hands. He comes to you halfway through the season and suggests an off-season tour. He varies the location every year. He's so well informed that he knows the relative strength of Continental teams and can be relied upon to arrange good matches.

"Travelling with the team, he keeps up the personal service. You hardly realize that you're on the Continent and crossing frontiers. You don't have to worry about pocket money and exchanging currency. Bela picks the quiet, unassuming hotels at which football teams prefer to stay. I remember last year when he did make a mistake over an hotel in Paris he moved us the very next morning to a better place, though we hadn't uttered a word of complaint.

"Footballers generally like their amusement laid on. In Paris, Geneva or any other place, Bela will get tickets for a show at a moment's notice, even if it's booked up. He seems to know everyone."

Miklos has no part in the financial arrangements when he makes a match. "My only interest is to bring the two teams together."

On tour, however, Miklos does handle the team's day-to-day expenses. "Currency exchange can be fraught with difficulties," he says. For instance, he took Leicester City to Rumania at a time when bribery and corruption were rife, and counterfeit coins were circulating everywhere.

In Bucharest he went to a bank to collect the expenses which he had cabled from London ten days earlier. The cashier said the money had not arrived. Miklos began to argue furiously, but his companion, a Rumanian soccer official, took his elbow and whispered: "Offer him two tickets for the match." The bribe succeeded. The money arrived in notes within ten minutes.

Later, at the hotel, a member of the Leicester

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THE STOLEN BOY

by HENRY WADE

ILLUSTRATED BY OSTRICK

Litmore had to make an agonizing decision. If he were to save his son he had to play the kidnappers' game—and outwit the police

WITHIN half an hour on a Tuesday evening the life of Herbert and Agnes Litmore changed abruptly. At 9.15 they were a contented middle-aged couple waiting for their ten-year-old son to get home from a youth club. At 9.45 they knew the terrifying truth: Ben, their boy, had been kidnapped. . . .

Another boy told a vague story of a lift in a car, of a man with a large moustache. The morning brought the first brutal message: *Ten thousand pounds—or else*. Litmore tried to pay the ransom, but the kidnapper, perhaps aware of the police trap, did not arrive to collect it.

When Ben vanished, Litmore thought at once of the two threatening letters he had received some time earlier. The newspaper he owned, the *Post*, was running an anti-vice campaign and hitting out at the funfairs of the north-eastern seaport of Farborough. *Drop your attacks*, the letters had said, *or you'll pay heavy*. Was he paying now?

Litmore had told the Farborough City Police everything. Next morning, Jonnison, the local superintendent, was alert at once when a funfair proprietor, Sam Oldwistle, phoned to make an out-of-the-way rendezvous.

Oldwistle told the superintendent that Reub Hodden, another funfair man, was hot against Litmore. "I won't go down without a fight," Hodden had said.

Days passed, and the Litmores' anxiety grew unbearable. Now, at breakfast on the Saturday after her son's disappearance, Agnes Litmore was opening a parcel brought by the morning post. Inside was a small box, covered by writing paper. Agnes lifted the paper, gave a short scream, and fainted. . . .

Helen found her father crouched over the telephone. "He's gone off," he said. "I couldn't hear him properly"

PART TWO

Ransom In The Gorse Bush

HELEN SHEFTON, the Litmores' younger daughter, was reading a letter of her own when her mother collapsed. Herbert Litmore had already left the room, but he came hurrying back, to find that his wife had slipped from her chair to the floor.

"What on earth . . ?" he asked.

"I don't know, Father. . . . I think she was opening a parcel."

A deeper anxiety flooded Litmore's mind. Rising from his knees, he looked at the cardboard box beside his wife's plate, and the colour drained from his face. He saw in the box a handful of fair hair, matted with dried blood. Unmistakably to father as to mother, the hair was their ten-year-old son's.

"The devil!" gasped Herbert Litmore, and dropped down again on his knees beside his wife. Helen was now dabbing her mother's forehead with a wet napkin and presently Agnes opened her eyes. At first they seemed to hold no expression; then, as sense and memory returned, a look of anguish clouded them.

Herbert saw it at once and, bending down close to her, said gently: "Don't worry, Mother. He's trying to frighten us; that's all. It's Ben's hair, no doubt, but not his blood, I'm quite sure."

The calmness of his voice had its effect; Agnes closed her eyes and tears trickled from them, but soon she struggled to sit up, and father and daughter helped her to an easy-chair.

"The letter," she said. "There's a letter with it."

Herbert went quickly to the table and, picking up the crumpled letter, which he had not at first seen, flattened it out. It was in, apparently, the same hand—capital letters printed with a ball-point pen—as the letters which had come to Litmore himself. It ran:

KEEP AWAY FROM THE POLICE OR NEXT TIME IT'LL BE A FINGER OR WORSE. SUNDAY 6 A.M. YOU LITMORE ALONE DRIVE TO HIGHLAND COMMON CASH IN HIKERS KITBAG WITHOUT STOPPING THROW BAG INTO PATCH OF GORSE AT SIDE OF ROAD LEADING TO WACOMBE JUST BEYOND BIRCH CLUMP.

DRIVE STRAIGHT ON. IF POLICE THERE OR LATER YOU'LL NEVER SEE BOY AGAIN.

IF NO POLICE AND CASH O.K. WILL RETURN BOY MONDAY. THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.

Litmore read the message slowly, then reread it. He would have liked to keep it from Agnes, but she knew it was there, so that was impossible. Slowly he walked across to her chair and handed it to her.

A flush of colour came into her pale cheeks. She looked up at her husband. "You must do what it says, Herbert," she said. "Don't tell the police; keep away from them. We must get Ben back; that's all that matters. Never mind about punishing the man; you must pay the money and get Ben back. I'll . . . I'll never speak to you again if you don't get my boy back. Helen, make him . . . tell him. . . ."

Herbert Litmore told Helen to get her mother to bed and send for the doctor. "But tell him nothing about this," he said sternly. "Agnes, I will do nothing till you are recovered, and then we will have a quiet talk. Maybe you are right and we should not bring the police into this."

LITMORE had, in fact, already made up his mind. Telling the police was too big a risk. They would again lie in ambush, if not to trap, at least to follow the kidnapper, and if he found out—as presumably he had done on Thursday—there was no knowing what he might do.

Meanwhile there was the day to get through. Litmore was anxious to get away from the telephone; he did not want to be rung up by the chief constable, still less to be asked to go to Headquarters for another conference. What, then, should he do? He had the money ready, and there was an old rucksack in the box room.

A glance at a local map showed him that Wacombe was a fair-sized village about ten miles north, but not on a main road. It would, he thought, be no bad thing to reconnoitre the way and make quite sure that he found the right gorse bush beyond the right birch clump on the right road.

It did not occur to him that he might himself be under observation. In fact, the chief constable had arranged for Waverley—the Litmore house in Clitton Park—to be watched both night and day. If Litmore went out, he was to be followed.

On this Saturday morning the man on duty was one of Superintendent Jonnison's constables in plain clothes, a keen young officer named Albert Rettick. He had already done two tours of duty, and was beginning to get just a little bored with the job when he saw Litmore come out of the drive in his car.

Rettick's spirits had risen considerably by the time he had got his motor-cycle going, and he

"You'll not do anything in a hurry?" Litmore urged the police. "You'll wait till my boy is returned to me . . .?"

was relieved to find that the Litmore car—a dark blue Rover, YOO501—was still in sight. There was no difficulty in keeping it there.

Litmore drove carefully and at a modest pace through some poor-class suburbs until Highland Common was reached. Here Rettick noticed that YOO501 was moving even more slowly than before—little more than 15 m.p.h. he judged—but there was no actual stop and gradually the pace increased until the village of Wacombe had been reached and passed.

After a leisurely half hour's touring, Litmore turned and drove slowly back to Farborough. Police Constable Rettick followed him on his uneventful return journey and then resumed his vigil. When he was relieved he reported the drive, but it did not occur to him to mention the slowing-down of Mr. Litmore's car as it crossed Highland Common.

That little item was therefore unknown to his colleague, Police Constable Jesse Box, when he in his turn saw Litmore drive out from his house at 5.50 next morning. Box heard the sound of a car starting up, and was already astride his motor-cycle among the laurel bushes when the blue Rover emerged.

Herbert Litmore had become conscious of that following motor-cycle even before he reached the Common. He wondered whether it was the kidnapper; wondered whether some attack might be intended upon himself. But he obeyed orders to the letter.

He slowed down as he came on to the Common—and was relieved to see the motor-cycle pass him. Approaching the birch clump, he slowed down still more to make sure of his aim, then jerked the rucksack out through his driving-window and saw it land in the patch of gorse.

Then he accelerated—and, with his eye on the mirror to see what was happening behind, nearly ran into Box at the bend in the road.

Slowing at the bend, Box had seen a figure dash out of another bush on the Common, run to the patch of gorse, pull out from it some bulky article, and hurry with it back to the bush from which he had come. Then he heard the roar of a powerful engine revving up and saw a motor-cycle move across the grass and, reaching the road, tear off towards the city.

Box swung his own machine round the moment he saw the running figure, and if it had not been for Litmore's car he could have been off in close pursuit.

The swerving approach of the Rover caused Box to hesitate, and he never had a chance to get within a reasonable distance of the man he was now after. Before he was half-way back across the Common the motor-cycle in front of him had disappeared, and he never caught sight of it again. Stopping at the nearest telephone kiosk, he got through to the station and reported what he had seen, then rode there himself.

As he rode, Box thought about the detailed report he would now have to make. Over the telephone he had spoken of the man who had collected something from a gorse bush and then dashed off on a motor-cycle. Now a doubt entered Box's mind. He had been two hundred yards or more away, but something about the speed of movement, the short running steps, something perhaps about the size or shape of the figure, made Box wonder whether it really was a man he had seen. It had seemed more like a lad, or perhaps even a woman.

When he got to the station, it was still short of 6.30 and, naturally, Superintendent Jonnison was not there. The duty officer to whom Box spoke on the telephone rang the superintendent's house, and to his surprise was told by Mrs. Jonnison, in a cross and sleepy voice, that her husband was not in the house; she supposed that he must be away on duty somewhere.

Box had, however, scarcely got down to his written report when Superintendent Jonnison appeared, wearing a pair of flannel trousers and a tweed jacket.

He laughed at the surprise on his subordinates' faces. "Thought I was out on the tiles, I suppose," he said. "Actually I was in my garage doing a bit of tinkering—I never sleep after sun-up. I heard the telephone, but my wife had rung off by the time I got in. I knew you wouldn't call me for nothing, Ludlow. Well, what's it all about?"

Police Constable Box told him. Jonnison listened carefully.

"You say you've let Information Room know, Ludlow?" he said. "They'll have called the Chief; I must get straight round. They'll not be able to dither any more after this. . . ."

It was 8.30 a.m. when Herbert Litmore, restlessly pacing his study, was told that Superintendent Jonnison would be glad if he might have a word with him. Litmore instantly guessed that his own early morning enterprise was known.

Superintendent Jonnison had sent a constable to fetch his uniform from home, so that he was now looking his most handsome and formidable self. The two men greeted each other in a friendly manner, but both remained standing.

"I have to ask you, sir, whether you have received any further communication from this kidnapper?"

"I have, yes."

"You did not inform the police, sir?"

"No. No, Mr. Jonnison; last time I informed the police, the plan went wrong. You know all about that. This time I acted on my own initiative, and I have reason to believe that the ransom money was collected."

Jonnison saw no point in following up his approach of "not informing the police." The chief constable could develop it further if he wished to.

"And your expedition this morning, sir? Will you please tell me about that?"

Herbert Litmore hesitated. Could he, by argument or subtlety, put the police and their inquiries off until Ben had been safely returned? Looking at his visitor closely he saw a strong jaw, a firm mouth beneath the short, dark moustache, a pair of steady and definitely hard eyes. His friend Faidlaw—the chief constable—would be easier to deal with.

"If I am to tell you about that—as perhaps I must—I should prefer to tell it to the chief constable direct," he said. "Don't think I am slighting you, Superintendent, but Mr. Faidlaw is bound to be told, and I would rather tell him myself."

Jonnison said: "That's quite all right, sir; the Chief is at Headquarters now, if you could come along."

Litmore was in no position to argue. Half an hour later, he found himself at Headquarters, alone with his friend.

But it was not as a friend that Faidlaw spoke to him.

"Mr. Litmore," he said, "I am sorry to have to speak like this, but we must get matters on a proper footing. Kidnapping is a crime, a most serious crime—as I am sure you realize—and to withhold information about it from the police is to compound a felony. Will you now, please, show me the further letter you have had, and tell me what action you have taken about it?"

Litmore flushed as he handed over the letter. After studying it for some minutes the chief constable listened to Litmore's account of his actions since its arrival.

"You'll not do anything in a hurry, Faidlaw?" Litmore urged him. "You'll wait till my boy is returned to me . . . ?"

The chief constable shook his head. "I'm sorry," he said, in a gentler voice than he had so far used, "there would be a real risk to the boy if we waited for that, quite apart from the risk of the criminal escaping."

"But . . . but you agreed to wait in the first place."

The chief constable knew that he would hear more on that line, and from other quarters. He believed now that he ought to have ignored Herbert Litmore's first appeal and gone straight out to trace the kidnapper.

"For a few days it seemed to me worth waiting, in the hope of Ben's quick return," he said aloud. "But now it is dragging on too long. I want your full co-operation, Mr. Litmore. I am sure I need not warn you again that anything less than that will place you in a most serious position."

Litmore sighed. "I must do what you say, Faidlaw. I realize that I have been wrong—in the eyes of the law, at any rate. I did hope that at least till Monday. . . . Oh, well; what do you want me to do?"

FAIDLAW had already discussed plans with his assistant, Hyde, with Jonnison, and with Dale, the C.I.D. superintendent. He said: "I want immediate information of any communication you get from the kidnapper. So far it has all been done by letter; the moment you get one I want you to ring through here and just give a code message that I will give you. If you recognize the letter, please don't open it till one of my detectives has tested it for fingerprints."

Litmore nodded his agreement.

"But," went on the chief constable, "he may not stick to letters. The next message might be by telephone, and this is where I am afraid I must give you some trouble. I want, if it is at all possible, one of my trained men to hear the voice of the kidnapper, or whoever is telephoning his message. The only way to do that is to have an extension instrument in your house. The Post Office will install it at once.

"I want whoever does take the message—yourself if possible—to appear rather stupid, to ask questions, to make the man talk as much as possible, so as to give my detective the best possible chance of recognizing and being able to swear to the voice if he hears it again. Do you understand?"

Herbert Litmore slowly nodded his head, scrutinizing his friend's face as he did so. "I will do all I can," he said. A wry smile lifted one corner of his mouth. "I think you have been very patient with me; probably you ought to have clapped me in a cell. . . ."

When Herbert Litmore had gone the chief constable called in Hyde and Superintendent Dale and settled the details of the telephone trap. Dale was already busy trying to trace the motor-cyclist who had been seen by P.C. Box. He had sent his men through North Harbour Division, questioning policemen and such early risers as had been out of doors at 6.30 a.m. on a Sunday morning.

"You might just as well have run into the fellow, Jim," Dale said to Superintendent Jonnison, when he heard that the latter had driven

The boy's hands began to shake, and Dale took one of them in his own large fist. "Take it easy," he said

from his house through the district of concentrated search.

Jonnison smiled. "Use your loaf, old boy; I didn't leave home until after Ludlow called my house, which was after Box rang him, which was after your kidnapper was safely out of the area and tucked up in bed."

Meanwhile, Herbert Litmore was at home again. His wife was awake now, and he answered her eager and rather hysterical questions, and tried to give her the confidence that he didn't feel himself. He did not tell her of his interview with the chief constable and the latter's decision to take the brakes off his men.

"Now," he said, "it's just a matter of being patient. The longer he keeps Ben, the greater the risk to him. Within twenty-four hours or so we can expect to have Ben back."

Agnes Litmore sank back on her pillows—Dr. Gorton had insisted on her remaining in bed. Herbert bent forward and kissed her, patting her hand gently. . . .

The telephone extension was installed during the morning and a detective arrived. It was not, of course, expected that the kidnapper's message—if it did come by telephone—would come for another twenty-four hours, but apparently the police were taking no chances.

At 6 p.m. the Litmores' maid reported that a relief for the detective had taken over. A little later Norris Shefton arrived, to inquire after his mother-in-law and to have a talk with his wife, who was still installed as nurse and companion to her mother.

Helen thought that her father might well ask Norris to stay to supper, but he did not do so and, knowing the not very happy state of their relationship, she did not like to suggest it herself. She went out into the drive with him, where his red M.G. was waiting. With an unusual display of affection she slipped her hand through his arm and squeezed it.

"You are being very good, Norris, dear," she said. "I know it's a nuisance for you, my being

Continued on page 29

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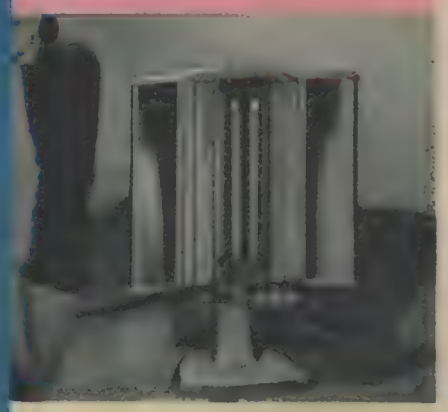

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An oil giant by-passes Suez

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Loaded with 14 million gallons of oil a new tanker braves the Cape—and brings oil more cheaply to Britain

It was a blustery Clyde day on December 11 when Captain Epameinondas Condoyannis stepped on the bridge of the Evgenia Niarchos to direct her maiden voyage. There were no farewells. Had any motorist known of the Evgenia's departure, he might have raised a cheer. She was off to the Persian Gulf to bring back nearly 14 million gallons of crude oil.

Her route was via the Cape but even with this longer voyage she can bring back more oil more cheaply, and almost as quickly, as lesser ships that use the Suez Canal.

The biggest merchant vessel built in British yards since the war, the 47,150 ton Evgenia Niarchos is one of the super tankers that can ignore Suez.

By land, it would take a twenty-five mile long goods train to haul the load that the Evgenia carries. At the refineries, this cargo of crude oil will yield enough petrol to run all the cars in Britain for one day as well as enough aviation spirit to fly the B.E.A. Viscount fleet round the world, and enough fuel oil to provide a city the size of Norwich with domestic electricity for a year.

Although he owns no car of his own, blue-eyed Captain Condoyannis nursed his great ship for the first three days like a cautious motorist running in a family saloon. By December 17, when petrol rationing began, the Evgenia was at full speed between the Canaries and the Cape Verde Islands, heading for the Cape of Good Hope at nearly eighteen knots.

Most of the crew of fifty-eight came from other tankers but Captain Condoyannis began drilling them in safety measures before they boarded his ship for the first time at Greenock. "If you see a man with a lighted cigarette on deck," he explained before sailing, "he is either drunk or crazy. There is only one thing to do—knock him down."

The reason for this attitude is that the Evgenia is essentially a series of thirty-three monster oil cans welded together. An engine room is tacked on behind to drive this cargo through the sea. The green deck, embroidered with grey pipelines, is the roofing over her inflammable cargo.

Flash proof screens guard all the doors. Breathers lead from each tank to a six-inch main that expels dangerous vapours high above the ship. Into each tank pipes are fitted to blanket any outbreak of fire with steam. During loading or ballasting the doors and portholes leading to the men's quarters are sealed off.

Fire risk is greater because of the immense cargo. Less than a year ago, the Evgenia could have claimed to be the largest tanker afloat. By a quirk of construction, she is thirty tons larger than her sister ship the Spyros Niarchos, which went into service last spring and held the title briefly until the appearance of the 84,000-ton Japanese built Universe Leader.

As soon as Captain Condoyannis took command he told the crew: "If you see a man smoking on deck—knock him down"

Now there is a race not only to put super tankers into service but also to build new port facilities for them. According to Captain Condoyannis, Britain has only two ports into which he can bring his new ship fully laden—Fawley, near Southampton, and Finnart in Dunbartonshire.

With her 47,150 ton capacity, the Evgenia is limited to half a dozen unloading ports in the whole of Britain and Western Europe. But she is not too big to squeeze through Suez. When the canal is reopened, the Evgenia will be able to pass through in ballast and return with her tanks five thousand tons below the full mark.

Going around the Cape of Good Hope, she takes a full load and demonstrates all the advantages of her size. A 16,000 ton tanker needs twenty-two days to bring oil from the Persian Gulf to Britain via Suez. The Evgenia will take the five thousand mile longer Cape route in twenty-nine days carrying three times as much oil.

It is nearly ten per cent cheaper to send oil around the Cape in a super tanker than to route it through the Suez Canal in a smaller ship. In a straight race along the 11,000 mile Cape route, the giants are about a third cheaper to operate than their lesser rivals.

While they are more economical to run, super tankers must be operated continuously to justify the investment involved. Seven or eight years ago there was not enough work to keep the entire world tanker fleet occupied. Since the Korean War the demand for tankers has increased steadily.

The four men who foresaw this increase in demand and who now own more than half of the world's tanker fleets are Stavros Livanos, Daniel Ludwig, Aristotle Onassis and the Evgenia's owner, Stavros Niarchos.

For the confusion of his competitors, Niarchos keeps secret the details of his financial operations. He will not place a price on the Evgenia but explains that she is one of ten tankers totalling 300,000 deadweight tons for which he paid £13 million. At this rate, the Evgenia probably cost between £2 million and £2¼ million. Today, it is doubtful whether the Evgenia could be bought for £3 million.

On the return Cape run, the Evgenia will be at sea fifty-eight days with a day in port at each end. There is little opportunity for members of the crew to spend their pay (between £30 and £40 a month) and after a year they receive a month's paid home leave.

To make up for the long and monotonous days at sea, the Evgenia's men live in spacious and air-conditioned quarters. Able seamen have one- or two-bunk cabins. The captain and owner each have luxurious suites. The owner's lounge stretches sixty-seven feet across the ship.

Although he is permitted to sail with his wife aboard, Captain Condoyannis prefers to travel alone and rejoin his family in Athens on leave. This preference, he says, is probably the result of his naval service as a submarine commander.

On every voyage that he makes with oil from the Persian Gulf, Captain Condoyannis can tell exactly how much the Evgenia could mean to the owner of an eight horse power car: her capacity is enough to take such a car 186,000,000 miles to the sun and back. THE END

Formation dance teams use the steps and rhythms of ballroom dancing, but combine to create patterns. After a TV show, Jay chats with Victor Silvester (left), who danced in the first formation team twenty years ago

Drillmaster on the dance floor

by REX GRIZELL

Maurice Jay trains his dancers like a sergeant-major. They must perform with grace—and the precision of Guardsmen

WHEN Sir Laurence Olivier decided to include one of the longest ballroom scenes ever filmed in his recent picture *The Sleeping Prince,* he asked the Official Board of Ballroom Dancing to recommend a specialist who could plan the dances and train the dancers. The board suggested Maurice Jay, who, as the country's foremost expert on formation dancing, was used to drilling teams of up to eight couples to execute the same intricate routines in perfect unison. Jay, a short, bouncy, dogmatic ex-commando, soon found himself in trouble.

Sir Laurence wanted the dancers to sweep down a wide staircase on to the ballroom floor and into the dance. The Film Artistes' Association, the union which looks after the interests of small-part players and extras, claimed that this involved "bit" parts which should go to extras.

Jay insisted that only expert ballroom dancers could carry the scene in the style required. A strike, which would have halted production and cost thousands of pounds each day, was averted only when Jay agreed to audition extras who claimed to be good dancers.

"I realized they would soon dance themselves out of the final choice," says Jay. Nearly three hundred extras attended the audition at a West End dance hall. An assistant director grew more and more anxious as Jay ruled them out by the score. "He kept reminding me that there would be a strike if I didn't pick some," says Jay. In the end it was agreed to add four couples from the extras to sixty couples of professional dancers. "When we filmed, I saw to it that the extras were as far from the cameras as possible."

Even with these dancers, Jay's troubles were not over. He arranged them in concentric rings around Sir Laurence and Marilyn Monroe, who were dancing together. "As soon as the dancing started there was constant jostling to get closer to Marilyn. We had to have several retakes." He had obtained a well-known professional to coach Marilyn Monroe. Marilyn put her arm round his neck in the American fashion "bunny hug." "I had to remind her tutor that this was not the accepted British style," says Jay.

Since Jay threw his energy into the promotion of formation dancing, his professional and amateur teams have made more than forty appearances on television, as well as taking part in West End cabaret and in competitions all over the country. In formation dancing, a team of up to eight couples dances pre-arranged patterns, using only normal ballroom steps and rhythms.

Jay gets no fee for his teams' appearances, but the publicity has enabled him to open two more dancing schools, in addition to his headquarters at Wood Green. He admits to making a comfortable two thousand a year.

"There is no doubt that Jay has played a considerable part in the boom in ballroom dancing," says Arthur Franks, secretary to the official board. Franks says that ballroom dancing is the second largest entertainment industry in

the country, after the cinema. One million people take lessons every week, and millions more go to dances.

Jay first had a team on television seven years ago. One night at nine o'clock he answered the telephone at his Wood Green school, and was asked if he could put his team on television the following night. He accepted at once. Then he stayed up until 3 a.m. getting in touch with the sixteen widely dispersed members of the team.

At nine o'clock next morning he was at Alexandra Palace to look at the floor on which they would have to perform. Jay describes it as "about as big as a large foreign stamp." Ample space is essential to the proper development of the patterns of formation dancing. "I had to spend the whole day adapting and drilling the team in a routine which would fit the floor."

According to Franks, once Jay had seen the possibilities of television he harried the producers until they took him again and again. "At the same time he bullied us. He called us a lot of old fogies and accused the board of a short-sighted policy towards formation dancing. We had many bitter rows but, in the main, events have proved him right."

Jay has trained several teams in the few years that he has been teaching formation dancing. "They marry off in dozens, I'm always looking for replacements." At present he has a four-couple professional team, and a number of amateur teams, including one for under fourteens, and another four-couple team whose ages total more than four hundred years.

It takes a year to create an effective team from scratch, he says. But if one member falls out a replacement can be fitted in more quickly. When one man fell ill three days before an important competition, Jay taught a new man in three days.

Jay, an ex-sergeant major, trains and drills his team with military brusqueness. He states that what appeals in formation dancing is the precision of movement and the perfection of line achieved. "It's exactly the same sort of appeal as the Guards marching and drilling. The only way to get results is drill, and then more drill."

Many people not normally keen on dancing find formation dancing attractive as a spectacle. When the Duke of Edinburgh attended a reunion where one of Jay's teams was performing, he was so interested that instead of leaving at the scheduled time, he risked upsetting his evening's routine by staying to the end. "He left saying he would have to change for his next appointment in his car," says Jay.

Apart from Jay's professional team, the only one in the country, all other formation dancers are amateurs—shop girls, factory girls, clerks and students. About two years ago Jay took one of his amateur teams to Birmingham to take part in a competition. They started out at six in the evening by coach after a day's work and arrived at nine-thirty. They left at one in the morning on the return journey. It was bitterly cold, with ice inside the coach windows as well as out, and they were delayed by fog. They arrived back at 7.30 a.m. in time to have breakfast and go straight out to work.

An effective formation routine, which never lasts more than five or six minutes, depends on the rapid and clear-cut formation of patterns, with equally clear phrases of dance leading from one pattern to the next. Dancers use the waltz, quick-step, tango and South American dances. Jay, who chooses the music and devises the patterns himself, has included, "just for luck," the popular old waltz "Fascination," in every routine he has so far planned.

The men dance in tail suits, the girls in dresses designed by Jay and his wife. "They have to be full and billowing, so that the skirts can be used in the formation of patterns. There are usually eighty yards of net in every dress."

Jay personally supervises every detail of the presentation of his teams. He insists that all the girls wear sequin half-hats in the same colour as their dresses and shoes, and they must all have their hair styled in the same way.

Now forty-six, Jay started dancing at fifteen. He opened his first school in 1936. His wife, Marian, kept it going during the war. When Jay returned in 1946 he started formation dancing, which he had seen while stationed at Blackpool during the war.

This kind of dancing was introduced as long ago as 1934 when a teacher named Olive Ripman presented a team in which Victor Silvester danced, but it did not become popular and died out altogether during the war except at Blackpool. Jay was the first to realize that, through television, it could provide a spectacle which would appeal to millions.

According to John Dilworth, secretary of the Midland Association of Teachers of Dancing, of which Jay is a past president, Jay is infuriated by people who snigger at ballroom dancing as "not quite the thing." "He feels that there was a certain stigma attached to ballroom dancing in the twenties and thirties. He has done everything in his power to give it respectability."

Once Jay took a team to a competition at Reading. On arrival one of the girls found that she had left her case with her dress and shoes behind in London.

Jay searched the dance hall until he found a visitor wearing a dress similar to those of his girls. He persuaded her to let him borrow the dress. Working against time, he took some of the red ribbon from each girl's sash until he had enough to make one for the borrowed dress. Then he persuaded another girl to part with her shoes. The girl who had lent the dress sat in her coat to watch the formation dancing.

"Afterwards both girls asked if I could put them in a team," says Jay. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

It takes a year to create a formation dance team, says Jay. He is always looking for talented dancers. In his teams "they marry off in dozens"

Even at practice the girls are dressed identically. "The only way to get results is drill—and then more drill," says Jay

Jay and his wife (right) design and supervise the fitting of dresses. On some, Mrs. Jay has fixed fifteen thousand sequins

Flash Fire

by ***OLAF RUHEN***

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

This dry, lonely bush country had made a thief of Peter—and a hero. Now he had to become a man

THE sun was hot and the shadows were blue, and a hundred lean, slack-muscled steers stretched out ahead of me for a crooked mile along the trail—every one a spring-heeled cleanskin, rangy and nervous, that I'd sprung this early morning from the valleys far back.

But they would be waiting for me at the bend, if they had crossed my tracks. So, just before the trail lipped the crest of the hill, I held my horse in under the branches of the big apple gum, and threw the reins over his head and climbed into the tree. For I was Billy Meehan, Billy the Rager, and cattle-stealing was my trade. I was known all through the territory. Came in there a score of years ago through a thousand miles of savage blacks; came in with a blanket roll and a stumble-foot pony; and now I had a hundred and fifty horses and four thousand cattle that had never come under an auctioneer's hammer.

I was Billy the Rager, six-foot-six, and a yard across the shoulders; Billy the Rager, and property owners looked the other way when I rode into town, careful of my temper in case I should live up to my name. Australia was mine, and the world was mine, and the thin clear air and the moon and the stars beyond; and I had another hundred cleanskins for my herd. . . .

And then my brother called me and I looked down from the tree.

"You playing cops and robbers again?" he shouted rudely. "Better get a move on if you want to have those cows milked before dark."

So I was Bobby Corcoran once more, and I came down the tree fast. Old Sandy had moved off; he was twenty years old, six years older than me, and he still hadn't learned to stand when I trailed the reins. You could catch him easy, though, so I climbed on him, and went on tailing the two cows up to the yard.

Peter, my brother, waited and dropped the slip rails for me. The flag was up on the mail-box, and he rode over and took a letter out of it before he went on to the house.

It was a pretty good sort of a house and just as sound as when my dad had built it thirty years before. It had three rooms, and a wide veranda out in front, with a rail where you could leave the saddle horses hitched. Peter and I had lived there by ourselves ever since our sister, Jennie, got married and Dad went off to live with her because he was all crippled up. My mother died a long time ago, and so soon after I was born that I don't remember her at all.

So Peter and I had so much room we didn't know what to do with it. We didn't have any neighbours, but the road from Widgembone ran right by our fence, and we could see the cars on it.

Widgembone was the big cattle station, and there were cars sometimes three or four times a week. Our cow bail was right in the open; it didn't have a shed round it, and I could see a car on the road now.

While I was watching, it blew a tyre, swerved across the road, and came to a stop only a little way from our house. I started on down, and Peter came out of the house and joined me.

Before we reached the car a big man got out. He glanced at the off rear wheel and walked up the road towards us.

"You got a jack?" he asked, and my brother shook his head.

"No jack," he said. "I've no use for one."

"You on the telephone?"

"No telephone," said Peter. "But I'll lift your rear wheel easy enough so you can change it. . . . Come on, Bobby."

We collected the tongue from the old pole wagon that my brother had taken to bits when the wheels were finished at last, and we took an armful of wooden blocks and went back to the car.

The driver had a girl with him. I just looked at her once and looked away, but the one look I had lasted a good while, she was so pretty.

She wore riding breeches and a jersey, like a man. She had her hair cut short, and dark little waves of it blew all over her head. Her eyes were grey and her nose was short and clear-cut, and her face was oval and looked full of happiness.

I turned away, but I could watch her in my mind's eye. While I was lying on my stomach at the back of the car, helping Peter set the fulcrum and put the wagon tongue in place for a lever, I could still see her.

Peter bore down on the wagon tongue and the wheel of the car lifted high, and I set blocks under the short end of the lever and the job was done.

The big man came up to Peter and said: "That was a neat, quick job. I liked the way you did it. I'm Bullivant, from Widgembone." He held out his hand and Peter took it.

"I'm Corcoran," Peter said. "I often see you pass. Been up at Widgembone about six months, haven't you?"

Bullivant nodded. "Just settling in. Lot of changes to make—now that my niece has come up to join me." He spoke over his shoulder to the girl. "Pam, come here and meet the Corcoran boys."

The girl came forward, and I looked a little longer this time. She was lovely, and she moved quickly and lightly like a thoroughbred yearling. Her voice was like music when she spoke, but I didn't hear so much of what she said. We talked a minute in the sun, and then we changed the wheel.

When he was ready to go, the big man looked out of the car. "I could use a man like you," he told Peter. "Would you be interested?"

Peter shook his head. "I've got the lad here," he said. "There's just the two of us. There's the farm to think of. I've got to say no, Mr. Bullivant."

"Think it over," said Bullivant, and the car moved off like an arrow.

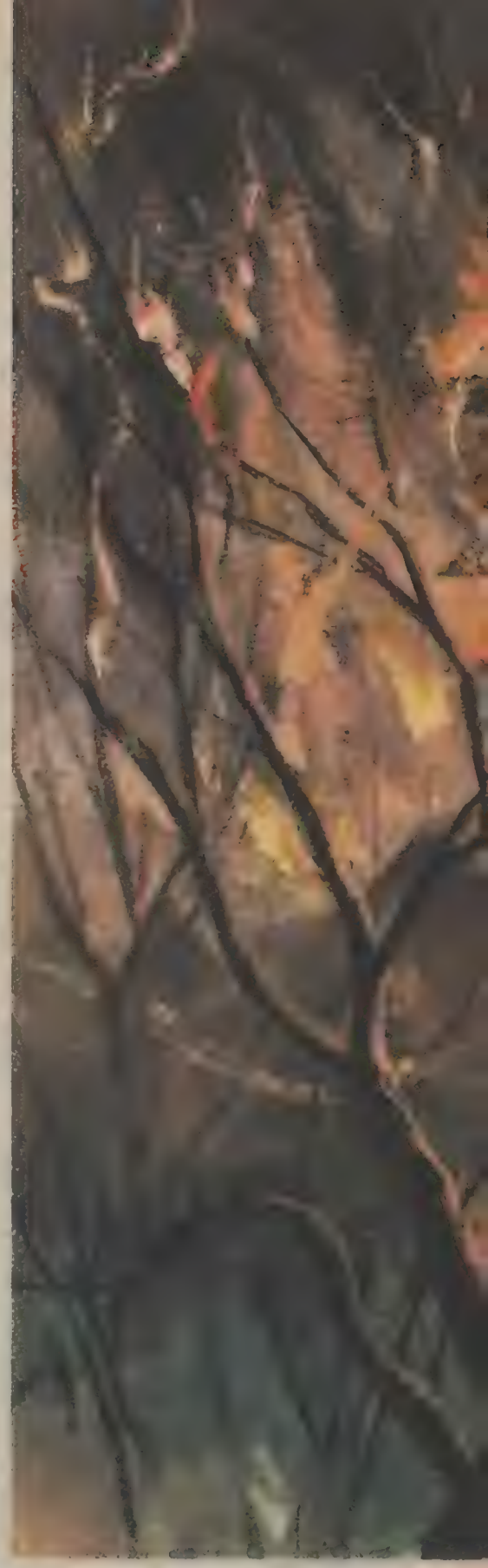
After we stowed the wagon tongue away and went back to the house, my brother was sick and sorry as a calf at weaning, and he stayed that way all night.

I picked up the letter that had come. It was from our agents, and we were partners, kind of, so I had a look at it, and there was a cheque in it—just about the biggest cheque I had seen in all my life. I knew Peter had sold cattle the month before, but we had had only three steers ready for the market. This cheque was for seventeen.

"They sent you the wrong cheque," I said.

Peter turned and saw me with the letter in my hands.

He crossed the room and took it away. "That's



With the girl cradl

d in his arms, Peter walked his horse straight towards our fire. I watched with amazement as Blaze-away came into the flames . . .

not for you," he said. "That's none of your business."

"Okay, okay," I told him. "But where did we get seventeen cattle? There were only three came out of the bush that I could see. There weren't more than twenty in the herd."

Peter didn't say anything.

"Cows must be taking after Uncle Billy the Rager's," I said. Uncle Billy used to brag his cows had more calves than a rabbit has kittens. Three years after he got his first thirty cows, he sent two hundred steers to market. "Where did we get those seventeen fats, Peter?"

PETER put down the knife. There was a time his face was always cracking in a grin and his laugh was light and happy, but he wasn't laughing now and his face was white and his eyes were strained.

"You want to live here all your life, this way?" he said. "You want to work from daylight to dark, never go anywhere, never learn anything? Never you mind where the cheque came from."

I said: "I've got a right to know where it came from, Peter. We're partners, aren't we? Kind of? I suppose they were Widgembone cattle. I mean, I suppose they were cleanskins anyway."

Peter said: "I don't want to get you into it, Bobby. I want you to go to school some more, to learn more than I did and get a bit farther ahead. I don't want you tied to a little bush farm like this. I should never have done it, but it's done now, and I suppose I'll do it again."

I didn't say anything at all. I've seen Peter ride ten miles because a parcel that wasn't ours had fallen off the mail van and he'd found it. I couldn't see him stealing cattle.

He said: "Now get off to bed, Bobby, and forget you ever saw that cheque. I didn't intend you to see it anyway. . . ."

Most days we worked together. We were trying to put up a fence right round the holding, and Peter had plans for ploughing some of the land and we had to burn and root out the stumps of trees killed by the axe years before. We felled a little new bush and split our own fence posts. We made our own butter and cheese and killed our own meat—we had a few sheep running on the hill.

But some days my brother set me a task, and then he would ride off and I wouldn't see him till late at night. He didn't say anything—where he had been or why. Nowadays I guessed it might have something to do with Widgembone cows.

The country was bone-dry this year. There was water in our creek—it never ran dry—but it

Continued on page 24

Trouble on his tail

by JOHN ENNIS

For Harold Ellis, towing a clay pigeon is no game. He often has to fight a private war—with the target

Mechanics work on a Mosquito at Exeter. Underneath it they fix the target for the gunners—the drogue

Ellis prepares to take off. He leads nine pilots in target-towing and mock warfare sorties

HAROLD ELLIS, the pilot, knew he was in for trouble as soon as the target drogue streamed out on its cable behind the Mosquito he was flying. Ellis was on a night exercise two years ago, towing a target for army gunners on a range in North Devon. Instead of flying smoothly behind and slightly below his Mosquito, the target, a twenty-foot funnel of fabric, began to whip up and down. "It was what we call a rogue drogue," says Ellis.

His drogue operator pulled the lever that should cause the cable to wind in, release the faulty drogue and automatically replace it with another. Instead, the whipping drogue dragged more and more cable off the drum.

Ellis left the range and headed for the sea, where he could safely jettison drogue and cable together. His engines were running at 2,700 revolutions a minute plus nine pounds of boost, a combination that normally gives a Mosquito a speed of more than two hundred knots. An anxious glance at his airspeed indicator showed Ellis that the drag on his tail from the whipping drogue was pulling his speed down to 140 knots, dangerously near the Mosquito's stalling speed of 110 knots.

He knew that previously one of his colleagues had accidentally cut an electricity supply wire with a dragging cable, plunging North Devon into darkness for a night. With no power in hand for emergencies, he set the Mosquito in a gentle climb towards the sea.

He never reached it. The cable ran out to its full length. Ellis felt a last sharp tug, and the aircraft changed its trim and surged up to two hundred knots. He was above cloud, so he estimated his position by dead reckoning, returned to his base at Exeter Airport, and told the ground engineers that they had to retrieve more than a mile of cable from the edge of Dartmoor.

In 1955 the Civil Anti-Aircraft Co-operation Unit at Exeter, in which Ellis, a fair-haired man with a round cheerful face, is chief pilot, used fifty-one miles of cable. "Most of it is in the sea," says Ellis. "It takes a whole day to cut a snarled cable from a drum. It is cheaper to treat it as expendable."

The Exeter C.A.A.C.U. is one of four such units in Britain, operated by civilian firms under contract to the Air Ministry. "The R.A.F. finds it cheaper this way," says Richard Pearse, an ex-wing commander who is manager of the unit. "Our ground crews don't have to stay off for coal fatigues and guard duty as they would in the air force. In the summer our pilots fly about seventy hours a month. They would be lucky to fly twenty in the R.A.F."

There are ten pilots, including Ellis, all of them R.A.F. reservists. In the last complete year they flew 2,840 flights in eleven Mosquitos, thirteen Vampire jets and six Ansons.

They tow targets for army, navy and R.A.F. Regiment gunners. They make mock low-level attacks in flights of three or four Vampires on army units to give the soldiers gunnery practice. "We join in the various mock wars that the army stages," says Ellis. "We fight for two days on one side, then go over to the other."

The pilots are paid an annual rate of £900 for the first six months, then £1,000 a year rising to £1,240 by annual increments of £60. The job carries no pension, and they are subject to periodical medical and technical examinations by the Air Ministry. Because they know it is not a job for life, the older pilots have to look out for work with a future. One ex-C.A.A.C.U. pilot now works in the drawing office at Exeter.

The C.A.A.C.U. pilots go out in pairs in Vampires for practice interception exercises. One acts as a raiding bomber and the other intercepts on the orders of R.A.F. ground controllers, to give the controller practice in guiding fighters.

Ellis was leading another pilot, Sammy Samuels, over the sea on a practice interception when Samuels called out that his Vampire was on fire and that he was going to bail out.

Ellis told Samuels to turn back and try to get over the land before he jumped. The controllers realized that Ellis, who was in cloud at ten thousand feet, would want to follow Samuels and pinpoint his landing position for a possible rescue. They quickly gave him a course that steered him to the other aircraft.

He found Samuels, with the impeller of his jet engine shattered, gliding. Ellis flew near and called Exeter Airport, where fire and ambulance services took up action stations. Samuels had to keep losing height to hold his aircraft at the correct gliding speed of 140 knots. At one thousand feet he had to make up his mind whether to jump or land. He decided to take a risk and try to land.

He was a little too high for landing when he

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Before landing, a target-towing aircraft must drop its drogue. One unlucky homecoming put an Exeter pilot into hospital for eight months

reached the beginning of the runway. Ellis, circling overhead, watched. "He did an S-turn and made a perfect wheels-down landing," he says. "I was damn relieved."

Another C.A.A.C.U. pilot, Bam Beaumont, was less lucky. His impeller broke just after take-off, at six hundred feet. "He landed in a neighbouring field," says Ellis, "but we forgave him because he did get back. He slid his aircraft in on its belly through a fence and on to the 'drome."

Beaumont broke a bone in his back, and was off-duty for eight months. In hospital, X-ray photographs seemed to confirm a charge Beaumont had jokingly made against another pilot. Beaumont had complained of a stiff neck one day in the pilots' room, and the other, saying he would cure the stiffness, grasped Beaumont's head and gave it a sharp jerk. The others laughed when Beaumont swore his neck was broken. The X-ray revealed a healed break in a bone in his neck.

The strangest flying emergency the unit has known happened to a pilot named Paddy Vale. Vale put his gloves on his knee just before taking off on a practice interception flight in a Vampire. When he was airborne he went to put on the gloves and found that one had fallen under the seat. He bent to pick up the glove, and the collar of his Mae West caught on the bracket of a cockpit light.

For a few seconds he was trapped, head down in the cramped cockpit, with no idea of his aircraft's direction. A desperate jerk freed him, and he found himself between two layers of cloud in a vertical bank.

"He had to make an immediate guess at which way was up," says Ellis. "He guessed wrong."

Vale turned the Vampire on its back. Then he went into a dive. At the bottom of the dive, gravitational force increased so much that one of the wing tanks tore loose. He turned back and landed safely.

The wing tanks are held by a single bolt, and on another occasion Vale lost one in a low-level attack. The fuel spread over the garden of an army officer, and the officer put in a claim for a new row of roses to replace some that had been killed by the paraffin.

Before a limit was set on low flying, some of the keener pilots used to speed in so near to the ground that they scared the gunners off their guns.

Once Ellis saw that the drogue he had been streaming was no longer there. He realized that the nylon cord between the drogue and the cable had been severed by gunfire. Where the cable joins the nylon cord there is a two-inch metal tube, eighteen inches long, called an exchanger unit. When the cable is wound in, this unit automatically attaches a new drogue with its own new length of nylon, and releases the original drogue and cord.

Ellis could not see whether the exchanger unit was still on the end of the cable. By radio, he asked the gunners to look for him.

Ellis flew closer, as the gunners suggested. Still the gunners could not see the exchanger unit.

"Come lower," they told him.

Ellis flew very close and very low. "After that they didn't talk to me any more," he says. "The wire had lashed through the power cable to their radio."

When not flying, Ellis, a thirty-nine year old ex-squadron leader, has a love for practical jokes. People who use his telephone are liable to find themselves afterwards with a sooty ear. He once got two army officers playing "battleships," blowing two matches across a water-filled soup-plate. When their heads were well down, Ellis slapped his hand in the water.

His friends, including the ground engineers at Exeter, fight back. Once they parcelled his car completely in brown paper and string. One weekend, they told him his office was to be painted. He hefted all his furniture into the corridor, and found it still there, outside his unpainted office, on the Monday morning.

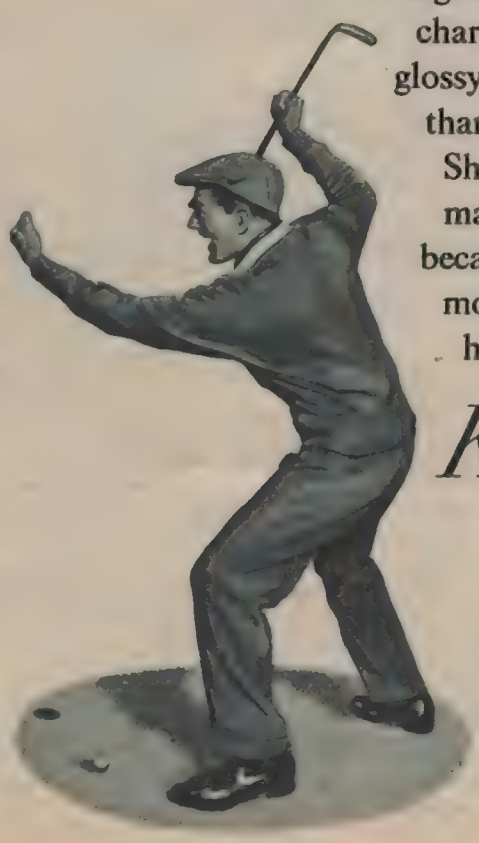
It was an army sergeant-major who played the best trick on Ellis and his C.A.A.C.U. pilots, a trick that carried a moral.

The pilots went to an army mess for a party. As they entered, the sergeant-major asked them in turn to step on a mat, pause for a few seconds, then walk on. Puzzled, Ellis led the way. When the last pilot walked off the mat, the sergeant-major said, "Now watch."

He pulled a string that led upwards. An 8-lb. exchanger unit ripped through a piece of paper that was neatly stretched below the ceiling; it crashed heavily on the mat.

"That's just to show you," the sergeant-major said, "what we have to put up with when you're flying around. The danger isn't all on one side." THE END

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK



Angela was lovely and charming—more like a glossy advertisement than anything human. She couldn't possibly marry a man who became a fiend the moment he got his hands on a golf club

Keep your temper, Walter

A gay new short story by the incomparable

P. G. WODEHOUSE

Flash fire

Continued from page 21

was the smallest trickle now, just a sliver of wet slime joining the pools. In the pasture the grass was straw-white and straw-dry. We had no fires in our district, but all those weeks the smoke haze hung blue about the horizon, and the sun rose in the mornings a flaring red ball nested in a grey-brown cloud.

My brother ran a ploughline round the home clearing and we burned a fire-break up to it. We burned the grass on both sides of the road too; so that the house stood in a little island of grass surrounded by a sea of blackened earth and black trees.

Then one morning my brother woke me early. There was smoke all around.

"Get the horses in and saddled," he told me.

When I turned the corner of the veranda, the whole mountainside, about five miles away, was split by a row of dancing, crimson lights. There was a fresh breeze blowing in from the north-west, and even from so far away I could tell the flames were racing.

The horses were troubled and I had a job to catch my brother's Blaze-away, but Old Sandy boxed the big mare in for me and I got a halter on her.

In country as rough as ours we normally walked the horses; but this morning there was no time. We cantered up the slopes and galloped the flats, and jostled the nags along between and over the rocks. Always the smoke pressed down on us, thicker and thicker, billowing from the tops of the trees.

We splashed into the last watery pool of Luncheon Creek and let the horses drink for a moment. Now we turned up the creek, urging on the horses as quickly as they would go among the boulders until we came to the old Stockman's Halt valley at the edge of our holding.

It was a flat and level valley about a hundred yards wide. There was good grass in it and permanent water. It wasn't really in our holding, except for the entrance. The rest was in Widgembone.

We raced into Stockman's Halt and stopped, and Peter sent me on up the valley to picket the horses. I jostled the horses up the valley, and when they were well round the first bend I picketed them. There were cattle there, restless and bellowing. I didn't want to look at them, because I knew what I would see when I did—the new-burned brand.

Sure enough, it was there, a big BC, our father's old brand; and worse than that, I saw on one beast where it was heavily smudged, and it looked as though it had been used to blot out the underlined W of Widgembone.

I didn't stay looking. I took off my own saddle blanket and ran back to the mouth of the valley. There was a pool in the creek there, and I tramped the sack in the water; then I ran to the cliffs where Peter was setting a back-fire.

After an hour, maybe longer, we had a band of black-burned country right across the mouth of Stockman's Halt, from one cliff to the other, and it looked as if we could breathe easy.

From the top of the cliff we could see over the top of our own fire. Our backfire was spread now over a quarter of a mile, a thin line of flame heading it; and the burn was lying across the route of the big fire coming in from the north.

But I hadn't time to look at it much because as soon as we looked north we saw the car, standing in the middle of the road a bit more than half a mile away. The fire was bearing down on it, and ahead of it, as well as behind, the road was cut. There was only this little loop of it clear, and standing in the loop was the big Widgembone car whose wheel we had changed.

"There's trouble," said Peter. And just as he said it I caught a glimpse of colour, a bright yellow spot flying down one side of a little gully away from the road.

"It's the girl," I said. "It's Miss Pam." Peter went down the side of the rock like a blistered lizard, scrambling and sliding, and raced across to the pool where we had dropped the saddle blankets. He picked them both up and ran for the horses. He waited to tighten Blaze-away's girth and surcingle, and I caught up with him there.

"Stay here! Wait here!" he yelled. He put his foot in the stirrup and Blaze-away was galloping before he was in the saddle. He rode her straight into the fire, and just when they reached the black band of burned grass, Blaze-away gave three mad leaps and reared high. Then she stretched out and dashed into the flames.

From the top of the rock I could see Peter racing Blaze-away in the angle between the two walls of flame. The girl was there, too, and for a moment I thought Peter wouldn't see her. Then he swung Blaze-away at right-angles and caught up with her. He reached down and took her under the arms, and she went up like a bird.

Now he walked Blaze-away back to our fire. When they came close, Peter stopped her and folded the girl in against his waist, and took the two black saddle blankets and wrapped them round her, and the beautiful mare came for the flames like a railway train.

I watched them with my mouth open, though I knew a horse will often run straight for flames on its own account. Blaze-away came into the flames like a wallaby into the scrub, and in a second she was in the clear, galloping across the burned ground, and I was sliding down the rock to meet my brother.

He pulled up to a halt and slid to the ground, and he slid the girl down with him. He held her just for a second before he let her go. She just said: "Oh"—like that—and sat down on the ground just where she was.

She looked a sketch. I could have laughed, except that I thought it wasn't any time to laugh. Her yellow dress was almost black, and wet in big patches and there were wet muddy leaves in her hair, and her face was blackened, and she had a big red scorch mark down one leg.

"Look after her, Bobby," Peter said, and he led Blaze-away to the water hole.

"You look funny," I told her.

"I feel anything but," she said. She watched my brother. "Do you people make a habit of being on the spot?" she asked. "If you do, it's just as well. I was so scared I didn't realize he was there until I felt a horse under me. If anyone wants to know, I think your brother's terrific. He's wonderful."

"Peter likes to be helpful," I said, and she gave me a funny look.

"That's the understatement of the year," she said. "Where's he going now?"

"Down to the water," I told her. "I reckon Blaze-away got a little burned."

"I did too."

She stood up, and just then a mob of those silly cattle came round the bend of the valley—with fresh brands she couldn't help seeing. She did see too. She said: "BC—is that the Corcoran brand?"

I told her yes. I said: "They're just some of the cows my brother just branded." She didn't comment, though she must have known that that was unlikely.

She said: "My legs are burned. Let's go down to the creek. I don't know why I'm talking about little things."

Peter was plastering mud on Blaze-away's legs, the mare standing quietly, though her eye was still wild.

"I could do with some of that myself," the girl said, and she flopped down smearing her legs with mud. I thought she was very sensible. Some girls would have been still screaming. . . .

We watched the firebreak for another hour, and then rode back through the valley. There were slip rails set up over the track, and my brother threw them down. I got off Old Sandy and was putting them up again when Peter called back to me.

"Leave them down," he said. "They won't be used any more." His voice had rasp in it, and the girl looked back, curious.

"This is Widgembone, isn't it?" she asked.

He said: "Yes. All that valley. It all belongs to your uncle."

I guessed we were all three of us thinking of those cattle. None of us mentioned them, though we had got pretty friendly in those hours.

We reached the homestead in mid-afternoon, and Mr. Bullivant and everybody wanted us to stay the night. When they heard all the story, there was a lot of excitement, and we just slipped out when we weren't noticed, and rode home through the evening.

It was midnight when we got back, but we didn't even eat. We just fed the horses and went to sleep, and when I woke again, it was afternoon.

You can imagine we had plenty of work to do after the bush fire, mending fences for a start, but we didn't do much that day, apart from seeing to the stock. And the following day Peter and I had a long talk. The Widgembone cattle had him worried.

"They were cleanskins," I said.

"Not all of them," he insisted. "And besides, I know very well they belong to Widgembone. I can't feel happy about them. I'm going to send them back and make up for the ones I sold."

"The money's spent," I said.

He nodded. "I'm going to fix that," he said. "Bullivant can have the farm—that'll cover it. It wouldn't be worth anything to anyone except him. I've written out a bill of sale. We'll put all our cattle in the Widgembone yards. I've written out a bill for them, too—in case anyone questions the brand. Then you can go to the homestead and explain. You can meet me back along the road and we'll start again somewhere else."

"I can explain?" I protested.

"Yes, you," he said. "If I go, Bullivant will talk about pulling the girl out of the fire—something anyone would have done. He'll think I'm expecting him to fall on my neck and forgive me. He'll think I'm counting on him talking me out of it and sending the cattle back. Well, I don't want any of that. I'm not taking favours. And I don't want to be paid for saving the girl. Anyway, it was the mare that did it."

"Don't you like the girl?" I asked.

He gave me a funny look. "Someday I'll be good enough for a girl like that," he said. "If I didn't like the girl, I'd stay on here stealing Widgembone calves. But, thank the Lord, I got some sense in time. And that was on account of her coming along."

"All right, then," I said. "Where will we go?"

He looked at me soberly. "Australia's a fine big place," he said.

We started right away. We picked up all the cattle from Stockman's Halt and drove them to the Widgembone yards, about three miles on our side of the big homestead. We didn't figure on ever seeing the farm again, so we had brought blankets and a tarpaulin and a little food. We had everything we needed in the world.

And soon after sun-up, I jogged Old Sandy along the road. About a mile farther on I met Mr. Bullivant and his niece. We all pulled up in the shade of an old gum growing by the road.

"I've got a message for you, Mr. Bullivant," I said, "from my brother." I told him how Peter had been hard pressed and how he had branded Widgembone cattle, and now he wanted to make it up. Mr. Bullivant and the girl were both looking at me very closely, and I could see it wasn't much of a surprise to her, anyway.

"I've got your cattle back in the Widgembone yards," I said. "They aren't all yours, but there still aren't enough to make up for—what went missing. And I've got the bill of sale for them my brother signed."

I pulled both bills out of my pocket and gave him the one for the cattle. "And this other one is for the farm," I said, but I kept a hold on it. "That makes up for the cattle we had and spent the money."

"Where's your brother, Bobby?" the girl asked me.

"Yes, where's your brother? Was he afraid to come and tell me himself?" Bullivant asked.

"My brother isn't afraid of anything there is," I told him quickly. "My brother just didn't want to come. He's too busy. We're going away and he's

"All right, all right! I'll have it fixed in a minute"

WIT—1

A witty woman is a treasure;
a witty beauty is a power.

George Meredith

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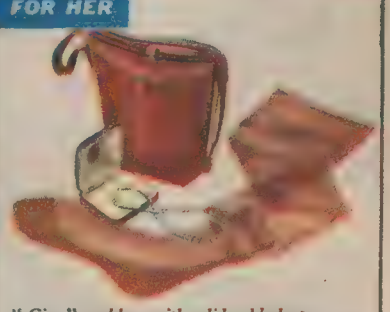

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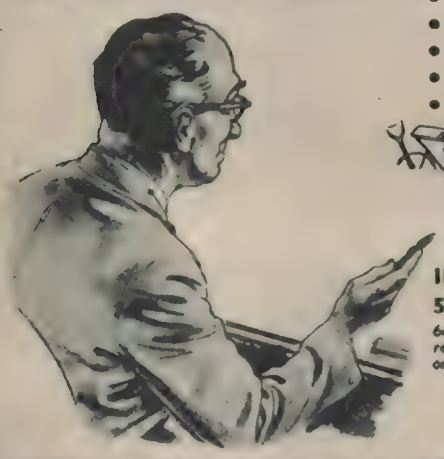

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[NCT 94]

getting an early start. But don't you think he's frightened because he isn't."

"Just the same, Bobby, I'd like to see him," Mr. Bullivant said.

I shook my head. "You can't. He's gone away."

I caught a glance from the girl's eyes then, and they looked big and sad.

"Well, what do you think, Bobby? How do you like this deal yourself?" the big man asked.

"I don't like it," I said. "I wouldn't have done it this way. And, Mr. Bullivant, I think you are getting too well paid for just a few old cattle. I don't think you should get the farm because it's too much. But we would still owe you money, and I wanted to ask you, could I come and work for you instead, until the cattle were paid for?"

He laughed at me, but it wasn't the kind of laugh that would make you sore. He said: "So you're not going to give me the other bill of sale?"

"Oh, yes, I will, because Peter told me to," I said. "But if it were me, I'd have done it some other way." I put the paper into his hands.

He looked at me, tapping both papers against his bridle hand. "Where are the cattle?" he asked.

"I told you, in the yards."

"Let's have a look at them," he suggested.

The cattle were restless, moving about, as they will in the morning, and it was certainly a pretty sight, but I didn't feel good.

I said, "What about it, Mr. Bullivant? Will you let me work it out?"

"I don't think I'm going to," he said. "I like that little farm of yours. I can use it. I want a good station manager who has a stake in the country himself, and the farm will be ideal. I can set a good man up on that, you know. I'd give the place to the right man."

"I suppose you can," I agreed. I was feeling sore about having double-crossed my brother in the first place, and now I was feeling worse about having my proposition turned down.

"You'd be a bit young for the job. You can see that, can't you, Bobby?" he said. "I need a good, steady man with a few cattle of his own to keep him on the job. Do you think your brother would be interested?"

Well, it was too sudden for me to think straight. "I don't know," I said. "I'll ask him, but I'll have a hard job to talk him into it. I think he'll take a lot of persuading, but I'll try."

I wheeled the horse, but the girl was ahead of me. "You've been running all the messages, Bobby," she said. "Let me try."

I saw then, straight away, what a wonderful idea that was, and for the second time in one morning I double-crossed my brother.

"Turn right at the big fig tree this side of the burn, and you'll find him along the creek," I said. And she was off like the wind.

Mr. Bullivant and I tied our horses to the stockyard rails and just stood about in the sunshine, watching a big flock of pink and grey cockatoos that had flown in to feed on the ripened grass. The girl was away a long time.

"Do you think he'll listen to her?" I asked Mr. Bullivant.

He laughed again. "You know your brother better than I do," he said.

"Well, if he doesn't listen, then do you think I could have the job?" I asked him.

"I don't think you have a hope in the world," he said, and he pointed to where the girl and my brother Peter were walking their horses up the road. They were riding close together, very slowly, and for a minute I could have sworn that they were holding hands.

THE END

WIT—2

Wit is the salt of conversation, not the food.

William Hazlitt

Contents of the dead man's pockets

Continued from page 11

catching momentarily, tugging a little, at each mortared crack. He simply did not permit himself to look down, though the compulsion to do so never left him; nor did he allow himself actually to think.

Mechanically—right foot, left foot, over and again—he shuffled along crabwise, watching the projecting wall ahead loom steadily closer.

Then he reached it and, facing the building, he stood in the corner formed by the two walls, one foot on the ledging of each, his forehead pressed directly into the corner against the cold bricks.

Very slowly, sliding his forehead down the trough of the brick corner and bending his knees, he lowered his body towards the paper lying between his outstretched feet.

He couldn't quite touch it, and his knees now were pressed against the wall; he could bend them no farther. But by ducking his head another inch lower, the top of his head now pressed against the bricks, he lowered his right shoulder and his fingers had the paper by a corner, pulling it loose. At the same instant, he saw, between his legs, the High Street far below.

He saw, in that instant, traffic signals, the lights of cars and street lamps, neon signs, and the moving black dots of people; and a violent, instantaneous explosion of absolute terror roared through him. In the fractional moment before horror paralysed him, as he stared between his legs at that terrible length of street far beneath him, a fragment of his mind raised his body in a spasmodic jerk to an upright position again, but so violently that his head scraped hard against the wall, bouncing off it, and his body swayed outward to the knife edge of balance, and he very nearly plunged backwards and fell.

Then he was leaning far into the corner again, squeezing and pushing into it not only his face but his chest and stomach; and his finger-tips clung with all the pressure of his pulling arms to the shoulder-high half-inch indentation in the bricks.

He was more than trembling now; his whole body was racked with a violent shuddering beyond control, his eyes squeezed painfully shut, though he was past awareness of that. It was extremely likely, he knew, that he would faint, slump down along the wall, his face scraping, and then drop backwards, a limp weight, out into nothing. And, to save his life, he drew deliberate deep breaths of cold air into his lungs, fighting to keep his senses aware.

It was impossible to walk back. He simply could not do it. He couldn't bring himself to make the slightest movement.

Seconds passed, with the chill, faint wind pressing the side of his face, and he could hear the toned-down volume of the street traffic far beneath him.

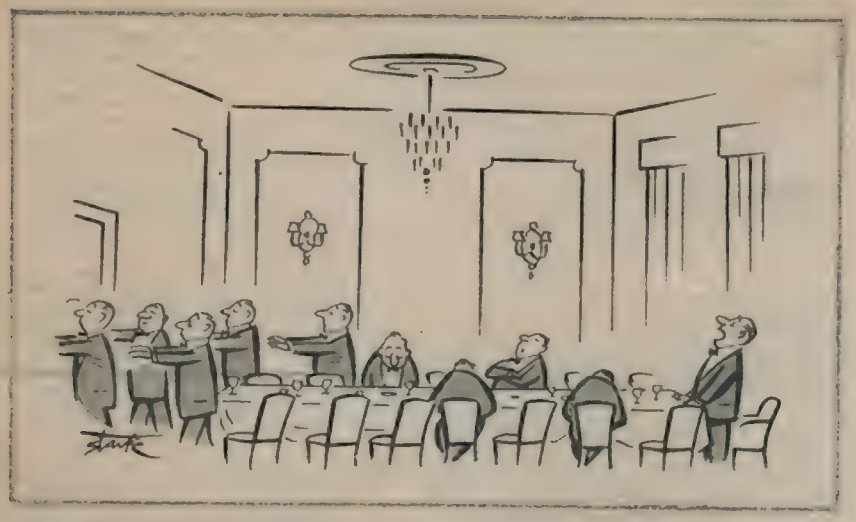
During a lull in the street sounds, he called out. Then he was shouting "Help!" so loudly it rasped his throat. But he felt the steady pressure of the wind, moving between his face and the blank wall, snatch up his cries as he uttered them.

If anyone heard him, there was no sign of it, and presently he knew he had to try moving; there was nothing else he could do.

Out of utter necessity, he was slowly able to shut his mind against every thought but what he now began to do. With fear-soaked slowness he slid his left foot an inch or two towards his own impossibly distant window. Then he slid the fingers of his shivering left hand a corresponding distance.

For a moment he could not bring himself to lift his right foot from one ledge to the other; then he did it, and became aware of the harsh exhalation of air from his throat and realized that he was panting.

As his right hand, then, began to slide along the brick edging, he was astonished to feel the yellow paper



pressed to the bricks underneath his stiff fingers, and he uttered a terrible, abrupt bark that might have been a laugh or a moan.

He opened his mouth, and took the paper in his teeth, pulling it out from under his fingers.

By a kind of trick—by concentrating his entire mind on first his left foot, then his left hand, then the other foot, then the other hand—he was able to move, almost imperceptibly, trembling steadily, very nearly without thought.

During one slow step he tried keeping his eyes closed; it made him feel safer, shutting him off a little from the fearful reality of where he was. Then a sudden rush of giddiness swept over him and he had to open his eyes wide, staring sideways at the cold rough brick and angled lines of mortar, his cheek tight against the building.

He kept his eyes open then, knowing that if he once let them flick outwards, to stare for an instant at the lighted windows across the street, he would be past help.

He didn't know how many dozens of tiny, sidling steps he had taken, his chest, belly and face pressed to the wall; but he knew the slender hold he was keeping on his mind and body was going to break.

He had a sudden mental picture of his home on just the other side of this wall—warm, cheerful, incredibly spacious. And he saw himself striding through it, lying down on the floor on his back, arms spread wide, revelling in its unbelievable security.

The impossible remoteness of this utter safety, the contrast between it and where he now stood, was more than he could bear. And the barrier broke then, and the fear of the awful height he stood on coursed through his nerves and muscles.

Then his moving left hand slid on to sheer emptiness, an impossible gap in the face of the wall, and he stumbled. His right foot smashed into his left anklebone; he staggered sideways, began falling and the claw of his hand cracked against glass and wood, slid down it, and his finger-tips were pressed hard on the edging of his window.

His right hand smacked gropingly beside it as he fell to his knees; and, under the full weight and direct downward pull of his sagging body, the open window dropped shudderingly in its frame till it closed and his wrists struck the sill and were jarred off.

FOR a single moment he knelt, knee bones against stone on the very edge of the ledge, body swaying and touching nowhere else, fighting for balance. Then he lost it, his shoulders plunging backward, and he flung his arms forward, his hands smashing against the window casing on either side; and—his body moving backwards—his fingers clutched the narrow wood stripping of the upper pane.

For an instant he hung suspended between balance and falling, his finger-tips pressed on to the quarter-inch wood strips. Shaking with the strain, the sweat starting from his forehead in great sudden drops, he pulled, his entire being and thought concentrated in his finger-tips. Then suddenly the strain slackened and ended, his chest touching the window sill, and he was kneeling on the ledge, his forehead pressed to the glass of the closed window.

Dropping his palms to the sill, he stared into his living-room—at the red-brown sofa across the room, and a magazine he had left there; at the pictures on the walls and the grey rug; the entrance to the hall; at his papers, typewriter and desk, not two feet from his nose.

Suddenly a movement from his desk caught his eye and he saw that it was a thin curl of blue smoke; his cigarette, the ash long, was still burning in the ash-tray where he'd left it—this was past all belief—only a few minutes before.

His head moved, and in faint reflection from the glass before him he saw the yellow paper clenched in his front teeth. Lifting a hand from the sill, he took it from his mouth; the moistened corner parted from the paper, and he spat it out.

For a moment, in the light from the living-room, he stared wonderingly at the yellow sheet in his hand and then crushed it into the side pocket of his jacket.

He couldn't open the window; there was no room to get his fingers underneath it, or between the two panels. The upper panel was tight with dried paint.

Very carefully observing his balance, the finger-tips of his left hand again hooked to the narrow stripping of the window casing, he drew back his right hand, and then struck the glass with the palm of his hand.

His arm rebounded from the pane, his body tottering, and he knew he didn't dare strike a harder blow.

But, in the security and relief of his new position, he simply smiled; with only a sheet of glass between him and the room, it was not possible that there wasn't a way past it.

After a few moments of thought he drew his leg up on to the ledge, slipped off his shoe and, holding it across the instep, drew back his arm as far as he dared and struck the leather heel against the glass. The pane rattled, but he knew he'd been a long way from breaking it.

The realization suddenly struck him that he might have to wait there till Clare came home, and for a moment he thought that was funny. Then he knew that he couldn't possibly wait here till Clare came home. It was the second feature she'd wanted to see, and she'd left in time to see the first. She'd be another three hours or——

He glanced at his watch; Clare had been gone eight minutes. It wasn't possible, but only eight minutes ago he had kissed his wife goodbye. She wasn't even at the cinema yet.

It would be four hours before she could possibly come home, and he tried to picture himself kneeling out here, finger-tips hooked to these narrow strippings, while first one picture began, developed, reached its climax and then finally ended. There'd be a newsreel next, and then a cartoon, and then interminable scenes from coming pictures. And then, once more, the beginning of a full-length picture—while all the time he hung out here.

Quite realistically, he knew that he

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would fall; no one could stay out there on the ledge for four hours.

A dozen windows in the block of flats opposite were lighted. Looking over his shoulder, he could see the top of a man's head behind the newspaper he was reading; in another window he saw the flicker of a television screen. No more than twenty-odd yards from his back were scores of people, and if just one of them would walk idly to his window and glance out. . . .

In the inside pocket of his jacket he found a little sheaf of papers, and he pulled one out and looked at it in the light from the living-room. It was an old letter, an advertisement of some sort.

Gripping one end of the envelope in his teeth, he twisted it into a tight curl. From his coat pocket he brought out a book of matches. With the twist of paper in his teeth, he opened the book with one hand; then he bent one of the matches in two and rubbed the red tip across the striking area.

He held the flame to the paper in his mouth till it caught. Then he held it down, watching the flame crawl up the paper, till it flared bright. Then he held it behind him over the street, moving it from side to side, watching it over his shoulder, the flame flickering and guttering in the wind.

There were three letters in his pocket and he lighted each of them, holding each till the flame touched his hand, and then dropping it to the street below. At one point, watching over his shoulder while the last of the letters burned, he saw the man across the street put down his paper and stand up —even seeming, to Tom, to glance towards his window. But when he moved, it was only to walk across the room and disappear from sight.

There were a dozen coins in Tom's pocket, and he dropped them, three or four at a time. But if they struck anyone, or if anyone noticed their falling, no one connected them with their source.

Clinging to the window stripping with one hand, he again searched his pockets. But now—he had left his wallet in the bedroom when he'd changed clothes—there was nothing left but the yellow sheet. It occurred to him irrelevantly that his death on the sidewalk below would be an eternal mystery; the window closed—why, how, and from where could he have fallen?

No one would be able to identify his body for a time, either—the thought was somehow unbearable and increased his fear. All they'd find in his pockets would be the yellow sheet. *Contents of the dead man's pockets,* he thought, *one sheet of paper bearing pencilled notations—incomprehensible.*

He understood fully that he might actually be going to die. He wished, then, that he had not allowed his wife to go off by herself tonight—and on similar nights. He thought of all the evenings he had spent away from her, working; and he regretted them.

And then he thought wonderingly of his fierce ambition and of the direction his life had taken; he thought of the hours he'd spent by himself, filling the yellow sheet that had brought him out here.

Contents of the dead man's pockets, he thought with sudden fierce anger, *a wasted life.*

He was simply not going to cling here till he slipped and fell. There was one last thing he could try.

Kneeling there on the ledge, the finger-tips of one hand pressed to the narrow strip of wood, he could, he knew, draw his other hand back, a yard perhaps, fist clenched tight, doing it very slowly till he sensed the outer limit of balance. Then, as hard as he was able from the distance, he could drive his fist forward against the glass.

If it broke, his fist smashing through, he was safe; he might cut himself badly, and probably would, but with his arm inside the room, he would be secure. But if the glass did not break, the rebound, flinging his arms back, would topple him off the ledge. He was certain of that.

He tested his plan. Keeping the fingers of his left hand clawlike on the stripping, he drew back his other fist until his body began teetering backwards. But he had no leverage now—he could feel that there would be no force to his swing—and he moved his fist slowly forward till he rocked forwards on his knees again and could sense that his swing would carry its greatest force. Glancing down, however, measuring the distance from his fist to the glass, he saw that it was less than two feet.

He waited, arm drawn back, fist clenched, but in no hurry to strike; this pause, he knew, might be an extension to his life. And to live even a few seconds longer, he felt, even out here on this ledge in the night, was infinitely better than to die a moment earlier than he had to. His arm grew tired, and he brought it down and rested it.

Then he knew that it was time to make the attempt. He could not kneel there, hesitating indefinitely till he lost all courage to act, waiting till he slipped off the ledge.

Again he drew back his arm, knowing this time that he would not bring it down till he struck. He waited, feeling the sick tenseness and terrible excitement building. It grew and swelled towards the moment of action, his nerves tautening.

He thought of Clare—just a wordless, yearning thought—and then drew his arm back just a bit more, fist so tight that his fingers pained him, and knowing he was going to do it.

Then, with full power, with every last scrap of strength he could bring to bear, he shot his arm forward towards the glass, and he said: *"Clare!"*

He heard the sound, felt the blow, felt himself falling forward, and his hand closed on the living-room curtains, the shards and fragments of glass showering on to the floor. And then, kneeling there on the ledge, an arm thrust into the room up to the shoulder, he began picking away the protruding slivers and great wedges of glass from the window frame. He was grinning in triumph.

He did not lie down on the floor or run through the flat, as he had promised himself; even in the first few moments it seemed to him natural and normal that he should be where he was.

He simply turned to his desk, pulled the crumpled yellow sheet from his pocket and laid it down where it had been, smoothing it out; then he absently laid a pencil across it to weigh it down. He shook his head wonderingly, and turned to walk toward the hall cupboard.

There he got out his overcoat, and without waiting to put it on, opened the front door and stepped out, to go and find his wife. He turned to pull the door shut and the warm air from the hall rushed through the narrow opening again.

As he saw the yellow paper, the pencil flying, scooped off the desk and, unimpeded this time by the glassless window, sail out into the night and out of his life, Tom Lowndes burst into laughter and then closed the door behind him.

THE END

Five-day Week

by WALTER BAKER

There's a hole in the path,
That catches the rain,
There's silt in the gutter,
That blocks the drain.
There's a gap in the fence
Where the dog goes through.
There's a fire-brick loose,
In the chimney flue.
There's an awful squeak
In the bedroom door;
There's a tile that moves
On the kitchen floor.
There's a football match
In the park today,
What a lucky thing
It's Saturday!

The stolen boy

Continued from page 15

away and not being able to look after your food and things."

Norris laughed. "And keep me in order. I miss you, old girl; I do indeed. Of course, you don't know what riotous living I'm not up to while the cat's away. High time you came back. As a matter of fact, I've turned over a new leaf. You ask Mark Jinnery. He's dining with me at the club tonight."

So she need not have worried about supper. She watched him drive away and wondered whether her husband really was beginning to settle down.

Supper without him was certainly a gloomy affair. Herbert Litmore ate little and spoke only in fits and starts. His mind was clearly on his worries and Helen had not the skill to distract him. Afterwards they listened to the news and a rather dreary talk on the Third Programme; they were just talking of going to bed when, soon after ten o'clock, the telephone rang.

All through the day Herbert Litmore had answered each call himself; now he went through into the study, and through the open doors Helen heard him say: "What?" sharply, and again, on a higher note: "What's that? I can't hear you properly. Hartlepool? Where? What?"

Realizing that he was in difficulties, she hurried through into the study and found him crouched over the telephone, staring at the receiver in his hand, his face flushed.

"He's gone off," he exclaimed. "I couldn't hear him properly. I only got some of it. I——"

"That's all right, sir; I got it all."

They turned to the door, and Litmore saw Detective-Superintendent Dale.

"I got it all, sir," Dale said. "May I use your phone, please?" Taking the receiver, he asked for a number. "Durham County Constabulary? Detective-Superintendent Dale here, Farborough City Police. Operation K, as arranged. Boy now in old gun-emplacement on coast three miles north of Hartlepool. Repeat back, please. Correct. Action okay? Right! Ring me at headquarters."

He quietly replaced the receiver and turned to Litmore, who was speaking with great agitation.

"I must go," said Litmore. "I must go at once. I wasn't expecting it till tomorrow. Where is this gun emplacement? How shall I find it in the dark?"

"That's all right, sir," said Dale calmly. "The Durham County Police will find him long before you could get there. We made arrangements with the neighbouring county constabularies this afternoon, in case the rendezvous was outside the city. They will bring him straight to Clitton Park Nursing Home; that was arranged with Dr. Gorton this afternoon. The doctor will look after him there, and in the morning let you know all about him."

"But I must be there. I must see him."

Superintendent Dale glanced at Helen Shefton.

"They are quite right, Father," she said. "He must have a quiet night and be properly examined by Dr. Gorton before he sees any of us. We don't know how upset he may be."

Her father nodded. He was beginning to recover his self-possession, though his hands were tightly clasped together.

"Yes, quite right. But, Superintendent, how do you come to be here? I expected someone quite junior would be listening in."

"I only came on at six, sir. I had a hunch he would come through this evening. His saying 'Monday' was in hopes that we shouldn't be ready for him. Of course, there is little chance of the Durham police catching him, but they will have got patrols out on the roads between there and here by now, and we shall be watching the roads into the city. Excuse me, sir."

He put through another call, to his own headquarters, and, though he did not say much, Litmore guessed that a

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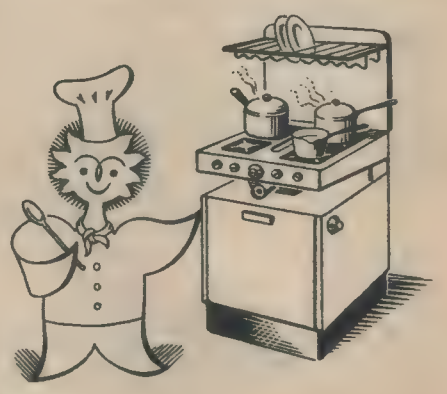

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"How lucky for me that you were here. I couldn't hear the man properly. The voice seemed so muffled—hollow—like . . . like. . . ."

Superintendent Dale smiled. "Meant to make it difficult for you to recognize," he suggested.

Superintendent Dale kept it to himself that in his opinion the voice had not been a man's voice at all, but a woman's. A woman speaking as "deep" as she could make it. . . .

"Ben is quite all right, Mrs. Litmore. You need feel no anxiety at all." Dr. Gorton, a tall, thin man with a dreary voice, was sitting beside Agnes Litmore's bed. "He has been under some form of drug of a narcotic character and is still comatose. That will wear off soon and naturally.

"Apart from that, and apart from some disturbance of the digestion, due to the drug and to unsuitable feeding, he is entirely healthy. What he needs now is just rest and quiet and careful dieting; all that he will receive at the nursing home."

"But Dr. Gorton, he is my child. He needs me; I must go to him, if he cannot come here."

Dr. Gorton gently shook his head. "Better not, Mrs. Litmore, better not. He really . . . he is not asking for you. He is quite happy, but he is sleepy and hardly knows where he is. I shall see him again this evening and will telephone you a report."

With this Agnes had to be content. Gorton had been obliged to take a much firmer line with the police, who would have liked to question Ben the moment he got back to Farborough the previous night.

"Not for forty-eight hours at least, or there may be fever," the doctor had said.

It was a maddening delay for Superintendent Dale. Surely the boy could give a description of the man or woman who had kidnapped him, and some idea of where he had been taken? Dale went to the chief constable, but was told that a doctor's word must be obeyed.

But Dale was able to see Ben Litmore sooner than he expected. When the police surgeon, Dr. Hallicott, visited the nursing home that evening, he found the boy sitting up. He was still white, with dark rings under his eyes, but those eyes had some life in them. Hallicott said that the boy might be questioned by a senior police officer the next morning, though for not more than a quarter of an hour, and that in the presence of the matron.

The detective was met at the door of the nursing home by a short woman in a dark blue uniform. After one searching look, she led him upstairs and ushered him into a cheerful room, herself remaining by the door.

DALE was shocked at the appearance of the cheerful youngster whom he had often seen at the youth club gymnasium. Ben managed a smile, but his face looked terribly white and thin and there was an ominous flutter at the corners of his mouth.

"Morning, old son," said Dale, pulling up a chair to the side of the bed. "Remember me?"

Ben nodded, but did not speak.

The detective went on: "I'm not going to bother you much this morning—just one or two questions. If you don't feel like talking, just answer with a nod or a shake. You were picked up that evening by a man in a car?"

Nod.

"Ever seen him before?"

Shake.

"Was there a woman where he took you?"

Nod.

"Young?"

Nod.

"Good-looking?"

Nod.

"Speak in a pleasant, educated voice?"

Nod.

Those last four nods gave Dale the beginning of a picture. There was not time to pursue it further in these fifteen minutes. He tried again. He said: "I'm afraid the next ones will need a bit more than a nod or a shake—if you can manage it. Did you see at all where you were taken?"

Instantly terror clouded the boy's eyes. Gasping sobs shook his body and his hands drew the bedclothes up to his face.

Dale felt a sharp tap on his shoulder. He hesitated; it was maddening not to be able to follow up his inquiry—but he rose and followed the matron downstairs, while a nurse waiting in the passage slipped into Ben's room.

"I'd like just one word with you, please, matron."

She looked as if she would like to refuse; but she led him into a small, cosy room and shut the door.

"Can you see any reason why that question should have upset him?" he asked.

"The boy is not fit to be questioned. I told Dr. Hallicott so."

"I am afraid it looks as if you are right," Dale said. "But it is quite vital that we should get this information from him."

The matron showed no sign of softening. "The boy's health is much more vital," she said.

Dale decided not to argue that point. He said: "I'm afraid he had a bad fright—probably before he had a chance of seeing where he was taken. Just one thing, matron; I shall be obliged if you will not mention to *anyone* just at the moment that there is a woman concerned in this case."

The little woman bridled. "Superintendent, there is no need for you to instruct me in my duty. . . ."

It was welcome news for Superintendent Dale when he heard that Ben Litmore was to return to his own home that same evening. With luck, the detective thought he should be able to get another innings on the following morning.

Dale decided that he would concentrate in the meantime on trying to imagine where the boy had been kept in captivity. He thought carefully over all the alternatives and then sent for Sergeant Halifax, who was in charge of Headquarters transport. Describing the problem that he had in mind, Dale asked for suggestions.

Halifax sat back in his chair. Presently Dale saw a light appear in the shrewd grey eyes.

"I can think of one place that might fill the bill, sir: the Dukeries."

"Dukeries? What do you mean?"

"Ah, you wouldn't know it by that name, sir. Duquesne Road, it's called. On the high ground near the coast."

During the 1920s the bungalows in this out-of-the-way part of Farborough were used by business magnates as ideal nests in which to establish their girl friends. Since then the character of the neighbourhood had never greatly changed.

"But what makes you think that the Dukeries fills the kidnapper's bill?" asked Dale.

Halifax smiled. "People living in glasshouses don't invite stones," he said. "They aren't nosy about each other's business. I should say the motto of the Dukeries is: 'No questions asked'. . . ."

It was at Ben's own request that Dale was at the Litmores' house on Wednesday morning. The boy had made astonishing progress in those twenty-four hours. Now he was ashamed of his dive under the bedclothes; the police were his friends, and he wanted to re-establish himself.

"Well, then," said Dale, "what about telling me the story in your own words. We've heard a bit from Jack, but not much."

Ben nodded, frowned in thought, and began his story. "You know about our going to the boxing at the club? Well, on the way back a chap in a car stopped beside us and offered us a lift. He was a biggish chap—broad, I mean. I couldn't tell if he was tall. He had a dark moustache.

"It wasn't very easy to make out what he said—rather as if he was sucking a bull's eye. P'raps he was, because when Jack had got out and we drove on this chap pulled a bag of bull's eyes out of the pigeon-hole in front of me and offered them to me. I took one and was just putting it in my mouth when . . . when it happened."

Suddenly the boy's hands, lying on the bed in front of him, began to shake. Dale took one of them in his own large fist. "Take it easy, lad," he said. "Don't tell me if you don't want to."

The young nurse who had come home with Ben was beginning to hover, but Ben gulped and screwed up a smile. "It's all right," he said, "only it was rather beastly—what happened then and all the rest afterwards."

With a sigh the boy lay back on his pillows. "I think the car must have stopped," he went on. "I'm not sure. Anyway, as I took the bull's eye, the chap suddenly brought his other hand across and put it over my mouth and nose—it had a handkerchief or something in it, with some horrible smelly stuff. I . . . I gasped and tried to get free, but he was too strong. Then I . . . I suppose I went to sleep."

Dale nodded. It was what he had expected, of course—chloroform. That meant the boy would have seen nothing of where he was being taken and probably nothing of the house he was carried into.

BEN was making a great effort to pull himself together. "When I woke up I was sick. It was beastly. A woman gave me a drink, but I sicked that, too. Then I went to sleep again."

Again the boy shuddered and the nurse came up to the bed and looked at him carefully. "Nearly enough for now, Superintendent," she said quietly.

Dale nodded. "When you were sick, were you in bed—or what?"

Ben said: "Yes. I didn't see much then, and I was rather . . . well, funny, most of the time I was there. But I think I was in a small room and the blind was always down. It was dark, mostly, except when the woman was there; she switched on the light. It was pretty cold. There was a patch on the ceiling, as if the rain came through."

"Just one more question," Dale said. "What was she like, this woman?"

Ben frowned. "Well, I don't know really. You see, she always wore something over her face—a sort of mask. But I thought . . . well, I kind of got the impression she wasn't old. She had wavy hair and her skin was smooth. Most of the time she was rather kind."

Better not ask now about the rest of the time. Dale rose to his feet. "Well, thanks, old man," he said. "You've helped a lot. I shall have to bother you some more, but not now." He walked to the door, then paused. "By the way, did you ever see the chap again—the chap with the moustache?"

Ben shook his head. . . .

When Superintendent Dale called at the Litmores' home the following morning he met with a setback; Ben had been over-excited by the previous day's visit, had slept badly, and was not—by doctor's orders—to be questioned again for at least another twenty-four hours.

From Dr. Gorton himself, however, the detective did get some definite, if discouraging, information. From his observation of his patient, and from his own quiet questioning, the doctor had come to the conclusion that the boy had been kept pretty continuously under the influence of narcotic drugs.

"Pentothal, perhaps, or Nembutal. Maybe phenobarbitone. There are a number of drugs that might be used in such a case," said Dr. Gorton. "But mind you, not by any Tom, Dick or

MY BROTHER Jim

WHEN he was at boarding school, Jim liked games, but he would not take them seriously. An entry in the school magazine describes his cricket prowess: "A player of considerable bonhomie but little skill; is overcome with laughter when bowled, usually for a duck; a useful field."

When he was twelve, however, he wrote a play that was performed at school. It was a melodrama called *The Seances*, and Jim played the part of an old lady.

On a darkened stage somebody screamed, and when the lights were turned on again, one of the cast was found murdered. This gruesome business continued until only my brother remained. He promptly decided to commit suicide.

I think he must be the only dramatist who has succeeded in killing off every member of his cast.

Jim was very proud of his success and when, a year later, he wrote a sonnet which Walter de la Mare published in a collection of children's poems, he thought he was all set for a brilliant literary career.

I had learned how to play the trumpet and when I heard that my brother had joined the school Officers' Training Corps as a bugler, I offered to teach him. For many hours we sat together, making the air hideous with our efforts.

I like to think that I started his great interest in brass instruments and brass bands.

Jim also played the hymns on the school harmonium—a rather large and ancient instrument with a very complicated device for increasing the volume.

His rendering of "Fierce raged the tempest o'er the deep" included his special storm effect music, which caused great amusement among the rest of the school.

I'm afraid he was not a good harmonium player, but he was the only one.

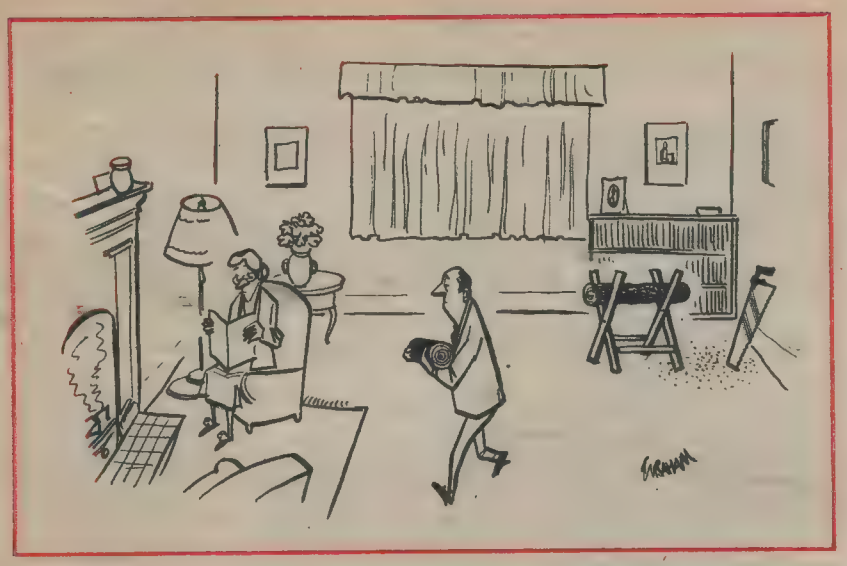
When he was eighteen, Jim thought he would like to go to university. He was told, however, that he had no chance of passing an ordinary scholarship exam.

He hit on the idea of relying on his thorough knowledge of music and going in for a Choral Scholarship. To his amazement, he passed.

When he began his first term at college, the organist who had previously examined my brother commented on the fact that he still had a nasty head cold.

"But I haven't got a cold, I always sing like that," replied Jim. "It's my normal voice." The organist turned pale.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS BROTHER? See page 32



Harry. A layman would run great danger of killing the boy, even if he could get hold of instructions about dosage. But an unscrupulous doctor. . . ."

The suggestion was a shock to Dale. If there was anything in the doctor's idea, it would have to be examined with extreme caution. Obviously some very delicate inquiries might have to be started among the medical practitioners of Farborough.

Dale decided that in the meantime it would be worth making an exhaustive examination of the Dukeries. Dusk would be the best time. Lighting-up time was a little after six, when people would be hurrying home from work and would not be in a noticing or inquisitive mood.

There was plenty of other C.I.D. work to be done before evening, and Dale was glad of the chance to take his mind off this unsatisfactory case. He felt refreshed when he had had a late cup of tea and was ready to set off for the Dukeries with Detective-Sergeant Tatley from his own headquarters' C.I.D. staff.

In more spacious days there had been open country between Duquesne Road and the city, but now Dale found, to his surprise, that rows of modest little houses ran right up to the south side of the road, so that privacy could not be nearly so complete as it had been when the bungalows had first been built.

It was difficult to understand how, even after dark, the kidnapper could have dared to drive a car, of which the number might well have been identified by the other boy, along Duquesne Road and in at one of these gates. An appalling risk, surely?

The detectives were driving east, towards the sea, and they had nearly reached the clifftop when the road and the big gardens ended. And here, turning up beside the last of the houses, was a grassy lane.

His interest aroused, Dale turned up it in the car. When it reached the extremity of the garden, the lane turned to the left and, even in the failing light, it was clear that it continued to run along the backs of the gardens as far as could be seen.

"This looks like the answer," said Dale. He backed the car out into Duquesne Road and left it, with its parking lights on, on the near side. "We'll attact too much attention if we drive along the back. Let's walk."

They walked right through to the end of the lane, a matter of half a mile or so, and found that it turned out into Duquesne Road again.

"Don't know how we came to miss that when we started down the road," said Dale.

"Concentrating on the gardens and the bungalows, sir," said his subordinate tactfully.

"Well, anyway, that lane makes a damn good concealed approach to those bungalows. And now we've got to find *which* bungalow and who lives in it."

Actually it was the chief constable himself who contributed the most useful suggestion, after hearing Dale's report.

"No doubt you will be talking to Superintendent Bellamy about this," he said. "He probably knows the inhabitants of both sides of Duquesne Road pretty well. If he can't suggest the likely culprit in the bungalows, he will almost certainly know the most observant lady on the other side of the street. That might save you not only time but publicity."

Bellamy, the superintendent in charge of North Harbour Division, was a big, heavy man, whose lethargic appearance belied his considerable intelligence.

"I don't get about that northern part of my division much," he said. "All the trouble's round the docks area. Tell you what, though; I've got a constable who's been in the division since the year dot. He may know something. He'll certainly know who you should go to for information."

This proved to be Police-Constable Luton, a tall, lugubrious-looking man with grizzled hair and moustache. He at once volunteered the opinion that if Detective-Superintendent Dale wanted the lowdown on the bungalow folk, he would get it from Mrs. Hettle, who lived at The Laurels, about halfway down the road.

"Widow lady, semi-paralysed; never leaves the window of her first-floor front. Sees everything and gets a kick out of telling the tale. Daughter looks after her."

The next step was clearly to interview the observant Mrs. Hettle, but to whom should Dale assign this task? He thought he had just the person. One of the best of the women police had married some five years ago but, losing her husband and two small children in a motor smash, had rejoined the force and was now a most valuable member of the C.I.D.

WIT—3

A wise man will live a much within his wit as his income.

Lord Chesterfield

Detective-sergeant Mary Wittam was now thirty-five. She had a pleasant face, to which the lines of trouble round her mouth and eyes gave added character.

She found the house in Duquesne Road, and the door was opened by a woman of about her own age, but thin and rather sour-looking. No confidences in front of her, Mary Wittam decided.

She said: "I have called to see Mrs. Hettle—your mother, perhaps? I don't think she will know my name, but I shall be glad if she can spare me a few minutes."

Miss Hettle hesitated. "Well, I'm sure I don't know," she said. "I will ask Mother. Will you wait, please?"

A minute later Sergeant Wittam was being shown into a large and airy bed-sitting-room on the first floor. Mrs. Hettle, no less thin than her daughter but with an intelligent face and alert eyes, was sitting in a wheeled chair near the big window. She clearly liked

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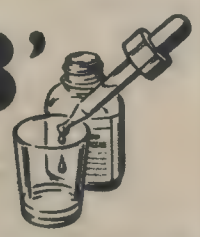

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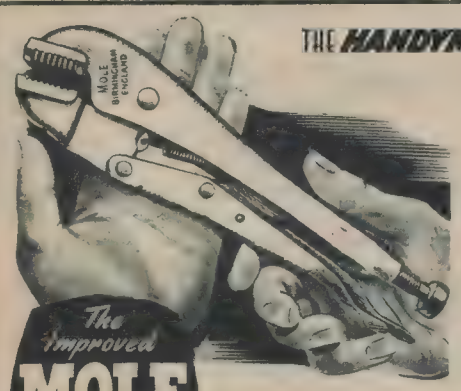

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the look of her visitor, because she told her daughter that she could now go for a nice walk before the afternoon turned cold.

A few minutes' conversation were enough for Sergeant Wittam to make up her mind. She liked the look and sound of Mrs. Hettle. She decided to be quite frank with her.

Mrs. Hettle pricked up her ears as she listened to Sergeant Wittam's story. She said: "This Sunday now—there was a little dark car went into Runnymede—that's two gates down towards the sea. I've seen it before and wondered who it was, that time of night, nearer ten than nine, because I do know Mrs. Dollis hasn't got a car of her own. I've often wondered. . . .

"Isabel—that's my daughter—she saw it this Sunday, because she was out taking our peke for his run, and it turned in just near her and she saw the number and it made her laugh. Now what was it? OMY something. It was driven by a gentleman, she said—a man, that is."

Sergeant Wittam asked Mrs. Hettle a question or two more about this car, but she was not greatly interested in it, because Superintendent Dale's idea was that the boy had been moved through the garden at the back. What she really wanted was a general review of the inhabitants of the bungalows and this she got in remarkable detail.

For the moment there appeared to be nothing to connect any of them, for all their reputed frailties, with the kidnapping, unless possibly it was the possession, in one case, of a motor-bicycle. A Miss Hanset had had one at one time, but Mrs. Hettle had not seen her on it for some months now.

Preparing her report when she got back to headquarters, Sergeant Wittam

WIT—4

Wit consists in knowing the resemblance of things which differ, and the difference of things which are alike.

Madame de Staël

realized that, though she had filled in a bit of background, she had not even sketched in the most shadowy figure of a kidnapper. At the last moment she included the registration letters—OMY; no figures known—of the car that had intrigued Mrs. and Miss Hettle.

It was some relief to her pride when inquiries at the city's local taxation department revealed the fact that the only holder of an OMY number in Farborough was Samuel Oldwistle, whose name she had heard mentioned in connection with the case. . . .

It cannot be said that Oldwistle regarded his visitors with acute pleasure. Superintendent Jonnison he knew, but the stocky man introduced as "Detective-Superintendent" was a stranger.

"Sorry to disturb you on a Saturday morning, Mr. Oldwistle, but there's one important matter about which I must ask you a question or two."

"Not another anonymous letter?" said Oldwistle, with an over-confident grin.

"Allied with that inquiry," said Jonnison quietly. "I should say that you are not obliged to answer questions if you feel that an answer may incriminate you, or you may prefer to have your solicitor present while you are questioned."

The grin disappeared from Oldwistle's florid face. "Don't like the sound of that," he said. "I've got nothing to incriminate myself about. I told you that I run my fair straight and I've written no threatening letters."

"All right, then, Mr. Oldwistle. Now this is the first question we are asking: where were you between nine and ten p.m. on the night of Tuesday fifth April?"

Oldwistle stared from one police officer to the other. "Where was I on Tuesday the fifth . . . ? How should I know? Tuesday the fifth . . . that's early last week. Why . . . isn't that the night—you're not thinking I took that boy?"

"I'm just asking that question, Mr. Oldwistle," said Jonnison calmly.

"But you know where I was, Mr. Jonnison. I told you about meeting Brackett, the Red Mill fellow, at the stadium. That's where I was—at the dogs. Went there with the wife and Henry Lammer-Jones, the solicitor, and his missus; they'll tell you I was there."

"Were you with them the whole evening, Mr. Oldwistle?" asked Superintendent Dale, speaking for the first time.

"Well, no, not all the time; we had dinner in the club and they stayed up there to watch the races, but I walked about a bit, met some pals, laid a bet or two; that was when I met Brackett, same as I told Mr. Jonnison here."

"What time did you leave your wife and friends in the club, sir?"

"What time? How should I . . . ?" Oldwistle looked uncomfortable. "Well, I suppose we finished our bite o' dinner round half-past eight and sat and talked for a bit. Yes, and Norris Shefton can tell you I was there; he sat with us a bit—ten minutes or so. Must have been quarter to nine when I went down to the ring."

"And the time you met this man Brackett?" asked Dale.

Sam Oldwistle pondered. "Just before I went back to the wife. Say half-past nine."

Superintendent Jonnison had been flicking through the pages of a notebook. "'Just short of ten o'clock' were the words you used next morning, Mr. Oldwistle. You think Brackett would remember the meeting?"

"Of course he would."

"Was there nobody else who could confirm your being at the stadium just before ten—or earlier?"

Oldwistle pondered again, then smacked his leg. "Why, yes, of course; Norris Shefton again. Been laying a bet on the last race, ten o'clock; we went into the club together, watched the race from there. Ten o'clock we were there."

The two policemen glanced at one another and Dale gave a slight nod.

"Thank you, Mr. Oldwistle," said Jonnison, "that seems to dispose of Tuesday, the fifth. Now, the same about Sunday, the tenth—this last Sunday; you'll have no difficulty in remembering that. Between, say, six and ten p.m."

Dale, closely watching this man, had seen his wary look directly Jonnison said "this last Sunday." There was no hesitation in the answer, however.

"Home Sunday evening, always. That's been my rule ever since I married. Quiet evening with the wife, then I'm fresh for work on Monday. We give the girl the evening off and just look after ourselves."

"I see, sir. Then if someone said they had seen you driving your car—your blue Vauxhall—into the drive of Runnymede in Duquesne Road just before ten o'clock this Sunday evening, they would be mistaken?"

Oldwistle's face turned purple, and his pudgy hand holding a cigar shook so that the short ash dropped. "Damn that inquisitive woman!" he snarled. "I

MY BROTHER JIM

See page 30

Jimmy Edwards, the comedian, is the famous brother of Mr. Alan Edwards

"I asked Mummy and she told me to ask you, so we're back where we started"

saw her snooping at me. Well, gentlemen, I can't deny it now; but where's the harm?

"You're not going to make this public, are you? Have a heart; it'll just about break up my home. I'm a happily married man, gentlemen. I love my wife but . . . well, you know how things are; one must have a bit o' fun sometimes.

"I've got a friend in the Dukeries, a nice young lady, and sometimes when the wife's away to her people for the weekend I pop up there, and no one's any the worse or the wiser. But my wife's suspicious. You won't give me away, gentlemen . . . ?"

JONNISON, in whose office the two police officers were now sitting, closed his notebook. "That seems to explain that, don't you think?" he said. "His Tuesday alibi is pretty well tied up, and he can't be lying about the girl friend at Runnymede; we can check that easily enough."

Dale nodded. "Oh, yes, he's got a girl friend there all right, but there's no earthly reason why she shouldn't be the one whose voice I heard. As for his Tuesday alibi, it didn't amount to anything for the time that mattered."

Jonnison was looking astonished. "You really think Oldwistle's the kidnapper?" he asked.

Dale laughed. "Well, no; frankly I don't. I don't wash him out, but he's a long price in my book."

Jonnison leaned back in his chair. "And who are the short-priced ones?"

Dale's cheerful face grew grave. "Ah, there you have me. I'm really no forrader. That boy's been a big disappointment to me. I felt sure he could tell us a lot, one way and another, but Dr. Gorton tells me there's no doubt he was under dope pretty well all the time."

"You really mean he can't tell you anything about the room? Sort of bed it was, pictures on the walls, that kind of thing?"

Dale shook his head. "Not a thing—except that he keeps on talking about an elephant. I asked him if it was a picture or a toy, but he doesn't seem to know. It's just something that got fixed at the back of his mind. Gorton says the boy's vision could record without the brain recognizing the meaning of what it had seen."

"Perhaps the vision will get clearer with time. You'll go on questioning him, I suppose?"

"I would, but he's going away."

Jonnison sat up sharply. "He is? Why? When?"

"Today, I believe. Gorton's not happy about him. Wants him to have a complete change of air and scene. I believe the old man's driving him somewhere; and, of course, Mrs. Litmore, too."

Jonnison's face was white and his dark eyes smouldered with anger. He stubbed his finger on a bell-push.

"Smith," he said when a constable came in, "have we heard anything about Mr. and Mrs. Litmore leaving Farborough today?"

"No, sir."

"Get through to their home and find out if they are going, and if so at what time."

Dale thought it would be more polite if the superintendent made this call himself, but then he realized that Jonnison was so angry that he probably could not trust himself. It was just one more example of the divisional superintendent being left out of the picture. He thought it more discreet not to speak.

After a short time Police Constable Smith returned. He said: "Yes, sir. Leaving at twelve o'clock."

Jonnison glanced at his wristwatch. "Quarter of an hour," he said quietly. "It will perhaps be polite if I see them safely out of my parish. I can't say I'm sorry they're going; the fellow might try another trick."

After a word or two with his clerk, Superintendent Jonnison went into the yard at the back of the station and got into the police car which, with its driver, was waiting for him. Within two minutes they were in Clitton Park and presently drew up outside the Litmores' house.

Looking down the short drive, Jonnison saw that a car was already drawn up at the door; the family party was on the steps, saying goodbye to Norris and Helen Shefton. Ben climbed on to the car seat beside his father, while Mrs. Litmore got into the back.

Jonnison did not want to disturb the family farewell, so he remained standing at the drive gate. As he drove out through it, Mr. Litmore saw him and stopped the car.

"You don't want me, do you, Superintendent?" he asked anxiously.

Leaning down to the driver's window Jonnison replied: "No, sir; no. I just wanted to wish you a good journey. And a happy holiday to you, Ben."

As he stooped lower to speak across to the boy, Jonnison put his left hand on the window-ledge. Looking at it, so close to him, Litmore saw that half of the middle finger was missing—something he had not noticed before.

"Thank you, Mr. Jonnison," Litmore said. "Thank you very much. Well, we must be off."

He let in the clutch and the car moved forward, turning to the right into the roadway. It was only then that he became conscious that Ben was tugging at his left arm. Glancing down for a moment he saw that the boy's face was white, his lips trembling.

"Daddy, Daddy!" Ben whispered. "That was the man."

To be continued next week

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Three steps forward

Continued from page 9

was the only way that I could keep my balance) so that she could help me with my dinner, because if I fed myself most of the food was wasted. This girl also helped me to do schoolwork. At the least excuse I was put back to bed, and treated as a sick person.

School was held every day in the ward, but our teacher had to give lessons both to us and to the children in the adjoining ward. We were left to work with our books much of the time, but, with my scanty schooling, for all the use they were to me the books might just as well have been printed in a foreign language.

I could read, "The cat sat on the mat" and things like that, but no more. I was given the Beacon Infant Reader Book Three, and it haunted me for years. I could not read it, but I was too ashamed to say so, and nobody ever found out because when I tried to read I dribbled profusely and swamped the book—so in self-defence the teachers left me alone.

One sunny day after school I was sitting alone in the day-room, singing to myself. Suddenly a young nurse came in and asked what I was doing.

"Singing," I said.

"I thought you were in pain," she replied quite seriously. I did not sing again for years.

When a child is at home his mother is the most important person in his life, but in hospital Mother becomes a kind of fairy godmother who comes on visiting days and brings sweets, comics and toys.

In hospital, it was the rule that all sweets were confiscated and evenly distributed at meal times. After one visiting day I had secreted a box of chocolates under my pillow and was quietly beginning to eat them in bed when the deputy matron came round. Hastily I thrust the box under the pillow, but unfortunately it broke and the chocolates tumbled to the floor. A nurse was told to take them away; I was given a good talking to and instantly burst into tears.

As soon as the matron had gone a kind-hearted nurse returned my chocolates, but whenever I see that particular brand I re-live the horror of that moment.

I WAS now making friends and got on well with most of the girls in the ward—except for one very pretty girl. She delighted in mocking my handicap and, as at that time I had a limited sense of humour and a very bad temper, I would get very cross. One day she teased me so much that I said: "Do you want a fight?"

She replied: "O.K.," so I knelt up in bed the best way I could to keep my balance and we began to fight. Before long I had torn a large piece out of her drill-slip, and when the sister found out I was confined to bed for a week.

Then one night a bomb fell on the ward for spastics, and some of the children were badly hurt. The next day we were transferred to Cuckfield Hospital, about twenty miles from Brighton.

I was very happy there. There were a great many babies of about one year old, some big boys and myself. Very soon all but one of the boys, Bill, were sent home. Bill was thirteen, the same age as myself, and had a very weak heart so that he had to spend most of his time lying down. We became inseparable friends.

Before I knew Bill, my letters home had always been written on foolscap sheets of paper, in block capitals about three inches high, which looked as if a spider had walked all over them, and read something like this:

> Dear Mummy,
>
> I hope you are keeping well. I have been up today. I have had a nice bath in a big bath and been put to bed.
>
> Lots of love from
> Vera

There was never room to write more than this on one sheet of paper—even if I had known how to spell the words that I wanted to use. But now that Bill was my friend he took over the job of writing letters from my dictation. He took the trouble to understand what I said and very soon we were having long and interesting conversations together. He was the first real friend I ever had.

One day my brother Stanley came to visit me and brought his camera with him. He had joined the R.A.F. six months previously, and this was his first leave. To me a camera was an object of wonder, one of those fragile things to be looked at but not touched, but I so much wanted a snap of my big brother that I asked if I could take one.

Stanley put the magic box between my knees as I knelt on the grass. He put his hat under the front of it and then lay down in front of me. I grabbed the camera very tightly with both hands and both knees and, tensing every muscle in my body, I took my first snap. To me it was a tremendous achievement and that photograph has always taken pride of place in my album.

I spent eleven months at Cuckfield, and then I was sent back to Queen Mary's.

As it was thought that all spastics were very backward my case papers were marked "mentally backward," and I was confined to bed.

After a month of just sitting in bed I was allowed to get up. All the patients got up at 5.30 a.m. to give us time to dress for breakfast at eight. The nurses would wake us and give us our clothes, then dress some of the babies before helping us. I did try to dress myself, but never managed more than my knickers and drill-slip as I was so afraid of falling off the bed.

When I was in bed I had longed to get up and sit at the long table with all the other children; but now that I was up there was not enough room for me, so I had to sit in one small chair with a bigger one in front of me for my books. This was not a very good idea because the chair I used as a table moved every time I tried to write. I did try to do my lessons, but I wondered why the teacher never marked my work.

One day she told the class to write out the well-known poem "Trees." I thought that if I wrote this all right she would mark it and be pleased. It took me a month to do, and it was very hard work which I did not enjoy. Every day I hung the bit I had done over the fireguard to dry—it was so wet with dribble. When I had finished, the teacher did not mark it because she could not understand my scribble, I was so hurt that I did not worry about school for a long time.

After tea, at about four o'clock, we were put to bed and it was this time of the day that I liked best. I could sit up in bed with restrainers (long tapes) tied on to stop me falling over, and could then draw or sew or play with the girl in the next bed. Sewing was done with a bodkin, as a needle was too dangerous, and it was hard work as the material became rather messy by the time I had finished with it.

Not all the children in the ward were spastics. Some were mentally deficient and some had polio and wore long irons. Of the spastics some were weak and stiff, some were very stiff, some could not keep still and some had epileptic fits. There was Rita, the little girl who slept next to me so that I could call the nurse when she had a fit in her sleep.

I grew very quiet and often played by myself. The ward sister had told me off once or twice for little things, and once she had put me to bed when I accidentally threw a cup at Rita. Poor girl, I gave her a black eye and nobody believed my story, which was that I went to give her back her empty cup but could not reach her, so I gave a little shove but my shove was too hard and anyway I wobbled. After that I became very timid and always tried to be very good.

One day we had a new boy in the ward; a weak little thing who could not keep still. He could not talk to anybody because he could not open his mouth very wide. His name was John —"My John," as people call him to this day—and he was going to play a very big part in my life.

In the late summer of 1942, John, Laurie—who had a wasting disease, and sat in a wheelchair, where he wrote everybody's letters — and I became good friends. Laurie played the piano wonderfully and would play anything we asked for. John read a lot. I did not have many friends and when the two boys wanted to play on their own I felt very hurt and unwanted.

It was because of this that, near Christmas, I told the sister that Mother wanted me to have an operation on my weak ankles. This was a lie, but I thought it would make some excitement, and it was arranged that after Christmas I should see the medical superintendent. I was nearly fifteen by this time and knew that I had only one more year at Queen Mary's, after which I would have to go to a women's hospital. But for how long? Until the war was over, or for life? I did not know. I wondered what purpose there was in living.

Mother had given me a game of rubber draughts for Christmas, and for a week one half of the children in the ward had been saying that John was the best player while the other half said that I could beat him any day; so it was arranged that we should have a tournament at 10.30 a.m. on New Year's Day, 1943. We sat on the floor of the dayroom with two small children to move the draughts for us, as we were both too shaky to make our own moves. The rest of the children sat around watching intently.

At eleven o'clock Sister walked briskly into the room, followed by a small, dark-haired woman in her thirties. We were all so engrossed in the game that we ignored her for about five minutes until the dark-haired woman interrupted us by saying: "Which of you is Vera Dean?"

"I am," I replied, and with those few words my whole life was changed.

WITH one hand held firmly at the back of my neck, the woman helped me up from the floor and said: "March!"

Nobody had ever spoken to me in that way before, and I was so surprised that I simply did as I was bid while her hand behind my neck helped me to balance. She led me to the Separation Room, or "Sep"—a small room next door to the ward. As we went I called confidently back to John: "I won't be long."

The "Sep" was about ten feet square, and its furniture consisted of a leather couch covered by a red blanket, a blue wicker armchair, another chair and a small table with a drawer. The strange woman sat me in the armchair and said: "My name is Collis. I am going to examine you."

She helped me to undress and then put me on the couch under the window.

"Let go," she said soothingly, and I wondered what she meant.

I looked up at her and shyly asked: "What do you mean, please?"

She showed me with her hands how to go floppy and loose, as when you are about to go to sleep. Of course, the more I tried to "let go," the more

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I shook. Then Mrs. Collis produced a metronome, and listening to its beat helped to take my thoughts off my shaking body. After a while she helped me to move my arms about. It all seemed so strange and so unlike what I had been used to that I began to wonder if she were not a little mad, but her hands were strong yet gentle, and she used them in such a certain way that I could not help trying to do what she told me.

Now it was dinner-time, and it seemed that she must surely let me go back to the dayroom, but no, she brought my dinner from the kitchen and set it out nicely on the little table, complete with a clean white tablecloth. She sat me at the table and said: "Enjoy your dinner."

I picked up the spoon with my left hand; a nice bit of potato in the first spoonful went up to the ceiling, the next went on the floor. Out of about six spoonfuls about one reached my mouth, I was so scared of kicking over the table or of giving Mrs. Collis a blow in the face. It was obvious to her that if I continued at this rate the dinner would soon be gone and I would still be hungry, so she helped me with the rest of the meal, holding my hand and arm to steady them and guiding the spoon to my mouth.

Mrs. Collis left at about two o'clock and then I was allowed to go back to the dayroom. John and Laurie had been really worried and greeted me with: "Where have you been all this time? We could not hear any noise and we thought the woman had killed you."

I told them what I had been doing, and they both thought that Mrs. Collis sounded a little touched in the head. But I told them that there was something about her which I liked, although I could not tell yet what it was; and we went on with the game of draughts, which John won. . . .

MRS. EIRENE COLLIS had taken her two daughters to America at the beginning of the war, to be left there for the duration, and while there she worked with Dr. Winthrop Morgan Phelps, who had an institute for cerebral palsied children. When she was returning to England, he asked if she would try to do work for the cerebral palsied in this country.

It was not easy. However, at last, one doctor did listen to her and, although he thought it peculiar that anyone should want to work with "hopeless cases," he agreed to let her try out her ideas at Queen Mary's Hospital. She started there on January 1, 1943, the day she and I first met.

Mrs. Collis's study and research into cerebral palsy have shown that something goes wrong with voluntary movement. Movement originates in the brain—the brain sends messages to various parts of the body and in a normal person these messages are automatically obeyed. In cerebral palsy it is from the brain that things go wrong; it is not the body or muscles that are affected. The word "spastic" has come to be used in Britain for this condition, but it only means "stiff," and not all people with cerebral palsy are stiff.

Each cerebral palsied person is different from all the others—I know lots of children and adults with this handicap and no two of them are absolutely alike. . . .

The day came when I was taken to the medical superintendent for an examination in connection with the proposed operation on my ankles. Mrs. Collis gave the superintendent her reasons against surgery for cerebral palsy.

Surgery had always been one of the orthodox treatments given, but Mrs. Collis was so convincing in her arguments that I was handed back to her with the words: "Take this child and do what you like with her."

Her method of recruitment was to tour the wards, seeking out cerebral palsied children, and when she found a child she thought she could help, that child was transferred to her care. It soon became apparent that the best results were achieved with the youngest children, and so the day came when Laurie, John and I were the only older children left in our ward.

John did not like this arrangement as previously there had been a number of big boys for his friends. One day he came to me and, with his left hand holding his mouth open, said: "Vera, will you be my best friend now that everybody has left? Laurie is so ill that I have nobody to play with." It was in this childish way that John and I became friends; a friendship that has lasted to this day.

Individual work in the treatment room went on every day, and after I had learned to stop struggling over everything I did, I was taught to sit on my buttocks and not on the base of my spine. The next thing was to tighten my tummy and buttocks and kneel up in front of a mirror. This took a lot of concentration, but gradually it became easier.

One day I said to Mrs. Collis that I wished I could dance. She obtained an old gramophone and some records of the *Swan Lake* ballet music, so that when I knelt in front of the mirror I could be a little swan, dancing with my arms in time to the music. We both loved dancing, and when life got a bit hectic Mrs. Collis would put on a record and sit in the armchair while I knelt and danced for her.

One cold wet afternoon in March, 1943, we were all examined to see if we had made any progress. The couch in the "Sep" had been replaced by a plain wooden table covered with blankets, and as I was placed on it one of the doctors said: "This child will never be able to stand alone."

To prove this he picked me up under the arms and stood me on the floor, waiting to catch me as I fell, but, to the complete surprise of everyone, including myself, I stood unsupported for about a minute. For the first time in my fifteen years I had stood alone without support, and it was as if a miracle had happened.

Mrs. Collis went very white and had to sit down, then, in a voice which rose almost from a whisper to a cry of triumph, she said: "I never thought Vera was going to stand so soon. I do believe that one day she will walk. It might take years, but she will do it. Already she can feed and dress herself."

The next morning, Mrs. Collis asked if I wanted to be able to walk by myself, to which I replied that of course I did; so, after the routine work, I began to learn to stand properly. At first I could stand only for a few seconds, and it was really hard work, but after a while it was possible to keep it up for longer. Sometimes I stood for a whole morning in a corner—because, if I tumbled backwards, the walls could stop me falling—and by noon my legs ached so much that I was glad to sit down to dinner.

Mrs. Collis always had dinner sent up from the kitchen and ate with us. She did not take milk pudding and always gave it to me. I looked forward to having dinner with her, as she would talk to me about any and everything; she was like a big sister. Unlike everybody else, she encouraged me to speak my mind.

By now there was a need for someone to do carpentry, and Jacob Grant, who worked in the hospital splint shop, was transferred to the ward. His first job was to make me a pair of skis, similar to real skis but shorter, more clumsy and made from wood. These were strapped to my boots and prevented me from crawling about.

Gradually I learned to walk with the skis, and then began the task of learning to walk without them. Mr. Grant made me a support called "the crab," which can best be described as a three-legged walking-stick made of steel. This I pushed in front of me while Mrs. Collis walked behind, talking all the time about a variety of subjects or making up silly poems like this:

Walk a little faster, said Vera
to the crab,
There's a woman just behind me,
playing snatch and grab.

Although we were all improving under our new treatment most people still thought we were silly. To settle the matter a psychiatrist came down from County Hall, headquarters of London County Council, and examined us one by one. Later, she told Mrs. Collis that I was intelligent but needed schooling. All this made Mrs. Collis even more determined to show that normally intelligent cerebral palsied people could become useful citizens.

My brother Stanley had been sent to India with the R.A.F., so I was overjoyed one day when he turned up out of the blue to see me.

I think that Stanley was one of the first people in England to realize that Mrs. Collis knew what she was talking about. In January, 1944, I received a letter from him which ended:

> How are you getting on with your new arrangement, "the crab"? Gladys has told me what it looks like. I hope you are finding it helps you along. Mrs. Collis is certainly doing all she can for you but a lot is up to you, so you will have to try very hard because when the war is over I want to see you standing in Whitehall waving to us as we go by in the victory procession. So start trying very hard as it won't be long now. Give Mrs. Collis my thanks for all she is doing.

Apart from a greetings telegram on my birthday a few days later, this letter was the last I heard from Stan. On January 28, 1944, Mother received a telegram to say that Stanley, who was training to be a wireless operator, had been killed on a training flight. We discovered later that a German fighter had shot the plane down.

The shock of Stan's death made my handicap much worse than it had been, although I did not realize this at the time. All my old shakiness returned, and Mrs. Collis had to work twice as hard to prevent her previous efforts from being wasted.

FOR a long time Mrs. Collis had said to John and me: "When you two can feed yourselves I will take you out to tea," and one lovely spring day the great occasion arrived. We were taken by car to Dean Farm, a really lovely old-fashioned farmhouse. We had cake of any sort we liked. This was a tremendous treat, as cake in hospital in wartime was rarely seen.

After tea we went to the house in Chipstead Valley where Mrs. Collis had a furnished room, and I could not help thinking what a nice bed she had; it looked so soft and comfortable and different from the hard hospital ones.

Then, as it was such a warm and sunny afternoon, John and I picked some wild flowers from the garden and sat and watched the traffic on the nearby road. This, to us, was wonderful. I had not seen a bus or pram for three years, and very few cars came into the hospital. We would have sat there and watched it all for hours, but soon the time came for us to return to the hospital, and two tired, happy children went to bed to dream of the wonderful outside world.

One of the children who was transferred from another part of the hospital to our ward was Kate. She was twelve years old at the time, and she had a great desire to be confirmed. After a lot of discussion she and John, Laurie and I decided we would all be confirmed together.

The ward was in quarantine for

STRANGE TALES OF THE SEA • 3

by Commander Douglas Duff

The murder without a motive

A MOTIVELESS crime is so rare that it is almost unknown. But the strange crime committed by three American seamen, W. H. Hobbs of Illinois, Ernest Sears from Idaho, and James Turner of Portland, Oregon, aboard the British ship Leicester Castle at half-past ten on the night of September 2, 1902, must remain one of the great mysteries of the sea. There was no conceivable reason for what they did.

The ship was about three hundred miles north of Pitcairn Island, the refuge of the famous Bounty mutineers, with Mr. Nixon, the second mate, on watch, when Captain Peattie, reading on the settee in his cabin, heard a tap on his door and Sears put in his head to say that a man had broken his leg.

The captain went to the saloon and told Sears to bring the casualty to him. Hobbs then appeared and, without a word, whipped out a revolver and shot the captain through the breast. Though badly wounded, Peattie tackled Hobbs but was shot again, and battered with a heavy club produced by Sears. As he fell, he was shot twice more. The second mate, who rushed in, got a bullet through the heart.

Hobbs and Sears ran out of the cabin as the ship roused.

The first mate took charge and mustered the hands aft. He found that the murderers had stolen the only firearm aboard, the captain's pistol, and, as they were lurking somewhere forward, he kept the hands in the saloon, waiting for daylight.

Two hours later, shortly after midnight, a raft floated past the starboard side. On it were Hobbs and Sears, who had been joined by Turner. The mate immediately hove-to until dawn, but when the sun rose there was no sign of the fugitives. They had escaped on a strange and precarious raft about twelve feet long and four wide, made from planks hurriedly lashed together and supported by three cork cylinders torn from the forward lifeboat. It must have swiftly gone to pieces in the heavy Pacific swell.

Until the sudden outbreak the three men had been well-behaved seamen, apparently content with life aboard the Leicester Castle. They stole nothing from the ship, except the materials for their raft; they did not take even their own gear. And they must have known it was suicide to embark on such a flimsy raft. Why did they not lower a lifeboat if they hoped to reach Pitcairn, or some other land?

No one will ever know what drove them to murder the second mate and seriously wound the captain, who, in the long run, recovered.

chicken pox on the day arranged for our confirmation, and the service had to be held in the dayroom instead of the hospital chapel. John and Laurie were dressed in smart grey suits while Kate and I wore long white dresses, borrowed from the storeroom. Kate sat with Laurie, and John and I sat together at the other side of the altar while a small congregation of parents and staff filled the room.

Laurie was sitting in a wheel-chair. I looked at him, so pale and thin, and then my gaze fell upon John. He looked so nice sitting there. He had become a very dear friend to me and I could not help wondering what it would be like to get married. Then the bishop walked in and we started the service.

As we sang the first hymn the German V1 "flying bombs" started to fall all round the hospital. We said our prayers to a background of explosions and finished our little service by singing that lovely hymn, "O Jesus, I have promised."

Not long after our confirmation, Laurie was taken ill with pneumonia. At about nine o'clock one dark winter night the nurse woke me and said: "Let me put you in a wheel-chair and take you to the 'Sep.' Laurie is calling for you and I am afraid it might be too late in the morning."

Laurie did not die that night or any other night while John and I were around. We sat by his bed day after day, just talking, talking, talking. Somehow our friendship seemed to give him something to live for. When at last he was moved away to one of the big London hospitals, his small spark of life just flickered out.

In 1944, a speech therapist, Miss Nancy Wood, came to us. She was fond of poetry and would write out verses in a book and mark all the sounds that I could not say properly. With her help, my speech improved.

By now all the children under Mrs. Collis used to take it in turns to have dinner with her once a week. The other children had their dinner in the dayroom at a long table. I sat at the end of it to keep an eye on everybody and to start the grace. Our table was not like an ordinary one; we all had our own food trays. These were pieces of wood with two holes in them, one for the plate and one for the cup, and the trays were clamped to the table so that when the plate and cup were put in them they would not move about. Our spoons had big wooden handles so that we could hold them easily.

"Smile, please!"

Every Monday afternoon we had a drum and tambourine band session. This was followed by singing, first in a group, then individually. Some of the children had good voices, although there were others, like myself, who made a noise more like a foghorn. Our handicap made it difficult to control the volume and range of our voices, and the noises we emitted varied from shrieks to grunts. Sometimes John would conduct our band, and I would lead the children in a simple ballet routine. They could dance with their arms even if they could not do so with their legs. We all liked the band because, like normal children, we delighted in making a noise.

Queen Mary's is a children's hospital and I knew that at the age of sixteen I would have to be transferred elsewhere. Inquiries were made throughout the country to find a training college for the physically handicapped where I could go for further education and to learn a trade, but in 1944 there was not one place that would take a girl with cerebral palsy.

I felt hurt, so deeply hurt, that no one was prepared to help me to make the most of my life. I knew that I was backward for my age—at sixteen I could read and write very little; this was because I had not had the chance to learn. I longed to go to college and prove my sanity.

I made up my mind that I would do everything in my power to help other people handicapped like me. I had ideas about helping them towards independence and giving them the chance that I had never had.

The road ahead was a difficult one. What I was learning in individual work had to be carried into everyday life. With skis I could walk anywhere, but I did not like using them unless some able-bodied person was near at hand, as I was so afraid of falling. Emotionally I was still rather unstable, and when being taught a new movement that was hard I often cried from sheer frustration. Or, if I could not get what I wanted, I screamed with rage and was promptly put in the bathroom to calm down.

By now I could sit properly on a chair or on the floor; I could stand in a corner of the room; I could walk with skis and I was beginning to walk with the "crab," but this was very hard work. Sitting on the floor, I could dress myself in about a quarter of an hour, except for doing up buttons and bootlaces. I had stopped dribbling, but any effort—even holding a pencil—was enough to make me lose control and start again. Now, when I did something that I had not done before, I used my right hand, and so, of course, I was using this hand more and more, although previously it had been practically useless. I still fed myself with the left hand, but now there was no mess and all the food went into my mouth instead of on to the floor. Speech was a lot better, too.

I was on the road to improvement. I was beginning to be an individual.

Sometimes Mrs. Collis would look at me and say: "If only you had been born fifteen years later, I could have helped you much more. You were born fifteen years too soon."

I would answer: "Well, I have been in and out of hospitals all my life, and I think the doctors have done everything they can. One day, when I can write much better, I will write a book about everything that has happened."

By now, all the children in the ward were improving in their ability to do things. As they became happier, more normal children, their general health improved, too, and it gradually became a rare thing for any of them to have to be kept in bed.

The new ideas about cerebral palsy were beginning to be talked about far beyond the walls of the hospital, and Mrs. Collis was getting all sorts of visitors, including M.P.s and doctors, people from all over the world.

I had always been very shy, but now, whenever someone interesting came, Mrs. Collis would bring them to see me, saying: "Come and meet Vera. She can tell you quite a lot about the work."

Then she would ask me to show them how I did my work, especially how I had learned to "let go" my self-imposed stiffness. I would get down on the floor and show them how to go floppy and how I rid myself of my supposed "spasticity." They asked many questions, and gradually I became accustomed to talking to other people and so lost all my shyness.

Mrs. Collis was now responsible for the treatment of ten children, and the doctors could see that they were all much better. So the authorities at last decided to give Mrs. Collis her own training unit and her own team of workers. But before the unit came to life the war had its part to play in our story.

NEXT WEEK: I am challenged to walk

Vera Dean's book will be published in the autumn by Faber and Faber.

Magic carpet for Europe's soccer

Continued from page 12

City party sent a porter to buy some picture postcards. He gave the man a note, and the porter, on returning, put the change in coins on a table.

Now, on the player's behalf, Miklos asked for postage stamps and told the porter to take the money from the change still lying on the counter. The porter picked up the coins and let them fall. "Sorry, sir," he said. "The money is counterfeit."

Miklos says: "I could do nothing about it. Everyone was up to the eyebrows in graft."

On tour, the team's culinary fads occupy much of Miklos's time. Before he caught a train with M.T.K. for Sunderland one recent Sunday morning, he examined the restaurant car luncheon menu, found nothing on it to satisfy the team and ordered from the conductor twenty-three steaks.

He further stipulated that the Hungarians, unlike most Continentals, liked their steaks well done, "not running with blood."

At Continental football grounds, one of Miklos's most important functions is to make certain that English teams get their cup of tea at half-time. "I remember the first team I took on tour. The half-time tea came weak and without milk. I asked for milk and it arrived hot. I then got cold milk and later asked for some water to make another pot of tea. This water arrived cold. It taught me to always give slow, explicit instructions."

Miklos finds his services in demand at all hours of the day and night. Once, a train carrying him and a First Division team through Western Germany came to a screeching halt in the middle of the night.

The guard found that one of the footballers had pulled the emergency handle. Miklos arrived on the scene as the guard, notebook in hand, fiercely berated the Englishman. He persuaded the German that in the darkened sleeping compartment the Englishman had grabbed the handle in error while trying to climb out of his upper bunk.

Before, during and after a match, Miklos often acts as interpreter and sometimes mediator when the managers and captains seek agreement over terms and the meaning of soccer rules. When M.T.K. questioned the size of the gate at Manchester City on their recent tour, Miklos translated the statement made by the Hungarians.

Eric Taylor says: "Bela never allows the Continentals to pull the wool over our eyes. With him around, you can get clear-cut instructions regarding substitutes and injured players."

In Switzerland on one occasion, Sheffield Wednesday played in a floodlit match. During the first half, Taylor several times counted twelve men playing for the opposing team. "The lighting was poor," he says, "and in the shadows on the far side of the field the other team were slipping an extra man into the attack or defence as necessary." At half-time, Miklos complained strongly to the Swiss manager. The infringement did not occur again.

Bela Pal Miklos, a soccer devotee since early childhood, was born on July 15, 1900, in the village of Nyirmartonfalva, some 120 miles east of Budapest. He played outside-right for his school at Debreczen, and he saw his first English soccer when a side toured Hungary in 1908. In 1912, he watched M.T.K. playing Sunderland: forty-four years later, in November last year, he personally arranged a return match in Sunderland.

In Budapest, Miklos studied medicine for four and a half years, but his father's death forced him to leave the university to support his mother and two sisters. He joined a travel agency and took up freelance sports writing as a sideline.

At Christmas, 1930, he visited this country as a guest of English friends. By chance, he met a man wanting to form a travel agency. Miklos successfully offered his services.

From London he continued to write for Hungarian sporting papers, and presently became British representative of his country's sports and athletics associations.

He started soccer match-making in the middle thirties, first taking Newcastle United and then Blackburn Rovers to the Continent.

On one occasion, Miklos arranged to take Wolverhampton Wanderers to Central Europe immediately after a Cup Final. Only a few days before their departure he heard that the Football Association had taken disciplinary action against the Wolverhampton team and had refused them permission to go on tour. On the advice of Stanley Rous, the secretary, Miklos gatecrashed an association meeting in London in search of an alternative team. "The chairman of Leicester City, then Second Division champions, offered to help me. Three days later I had his team on the boat crossing the Channel."

September 3, 1939, brought an end to Miklos's work both as a travel agent and as a soccer matchmaker. He trained instead as an aircraft inspector for the Ministry of Aircraft Production. After the war he took a job with the B.B.C. European Service, married an English girl named Eleanor King, and became a naturalized British subject. Sir Stanley Rous acted as a nominee.

Miklos renewed his connections with Hungarian sport, but relinquished them in 1948 when the Communists came to power. "I am not prepared," Miklos says, "to mix sport with politics."

That same year he re-entered the travel agency business in London on his own account, and began once more to take English and Scottish League soccer teams on Continental tours.

An enthusiastic and active sportsman himself, Miklos keeps in trim by playing tennis every Sunday. He is quite fervent about sport. He insists as a condition of employment that each member of the small staff of his travel agency shall have an abiding interest in the subject.

"Sport," he says, "is the greatest weapon in the cause of international goodwill and peace." THE END

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Remember Hungary And	Road Of The Future
After Peace	Nice Bit Of Stuff
According To Moscow	Homeless
To Uncle Sam	The Doctors
Faster, Faster, Faster	A Knock-out
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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries 6d. per *Bullet*. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated March 16); also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, March 2, for early news of *Bullets* No. 2,077 result.)

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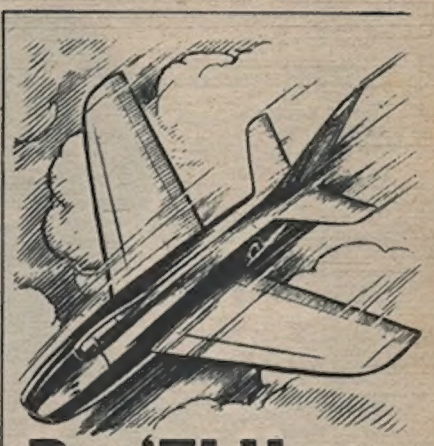

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